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to-day in the service of  
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## A Vital Ministry



# A Vital Ministry

*The Pastor of To-Day  
In the Service of Man*



✓ By  
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## Preface

**T**HROUGH some years of experience and observation the author has carefully watched and studied the characteristics of our present-day ministry. His position as Professor of Church History has compelled him to extend his observations through the centuries to the beginnings of Christian history. No other phenomenon of these centuries has impressed him so deeply as the baneful effects of ecclesiasticism. It has invaded every nook and corner of Christian life, bearing paralysis and dry rot, where there should be abundance of life. This fatal failure has been due to just one thing: Institutions have been placed in the room of life, in the thought and efforts of the ministry. It is the purpose of this book to recall God's ministers to the position and attitude of their divine Master and the apostles, the attitude of service to life. Man is central, the institution must take the position of a servant. The adoption of such an attitude would affect the minister's methods, stand-

point and efficiency in every department of his work. The effort has been made to point out in the following pages how some features of ministerial labour would be modified and vitalized by the vital ideal in the ministry.

Once the ideal of a vital ministry is in mind its application can be extended far beyond the subjects treated in this volume. Above all things we need to-day a ministry that can speak to the men of to-day, a ministry that will not be confused or turned from the main matter by the persistent demands of a beaten but resolute ecclesiasticism. It is the hope of the author that this book may help in some measure in this direction by clarifying the proper ministerial ideal and encouraging men to follow its gleam.

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## I

### THE VITAL IDEAL IN THE MINISTRY

“**I** CAME that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.” In these words the Master expressed His conception of His task in contrast with the work of the teachers who had gone before Him. Later, after the agony of Calvary and the victory over the grave were behind Him and He was laying His visible work down on the shoulders of the men who had companied with Him, He summed up their task in these memorable words, “As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.” He thus gave to His disciples the task which His Father had given Him, sending them forth on precisely the same mission. His work was to be their work, the ideal of their ministry the same as His.

Few passages of Scripture are more important for the minister than this. The ideal which one cherishes as the aim of life is the most important single factor in the success or failure of that life. The character and

quantity of the work done is almost wholly dependent upon this ideal. In no calling is this more profoundly true than in the ministry. The minister moves in the realm of ideas and ideals, he is the knight errant of the spiritual. He deals with realities, the most profound and vital realities of life in fact, and yet with realities which are somewhat dim and elusive to the ordinary mind. Moreover the central and main purpose of the ministry has, through the process of the centuries, become so heaped about with masses of subsidiary but more or less important matters that there is danger that the heart of the calling which affords reason for its existence may be greatly obscured or even entirely lost from sight. Not infrequently the mind of the minister becomes confused and he allows minor matters to usurp the controlling place as the ideal or dominant purpose of his life. In so far as this catastrophe falls upon him his ministry will inevitably be weakened or blighted.

Every thoughtful Christian believes, and must believe, that Christianity in its essence is the salt of the earth and the light of the world, sweetening and saving, enlightening and liberating. And yet no man, possessed of even a slight acquaintance with the history

and the present condition of Christianity throughout the world, can fail to see that as a whole it has fallen far short of its exalted possibilities. In fact we are compelled to admit with shame of face that historic Christianity has often shackled and manacled men, and sometimes administered poison for which there was no antidote. Sometimes instead of bread the Church has given a stone, instead of freedom slavery, instead of purity and enlightenment darkness and superstition. Why this great failure, the most tragic perhaps in the annals of mankind? It is chiefly because the ministers of religion have missed the main matter, turning aside to subordinate things which they exalted into a central and therefore false position. The leaders of the blind have themselves become blind and both together have fallen into the ditch.

What then is the proper ideal of the ministry, the one great aim which should subordinate all else to itself and direct all the minister's energies? In a word it is the nurture and growth of life—the soundest, fullest, completest life that is possible for each individual. So far as we can learn from both science and revelation this was and is the task which God has set for Himself to work upon through the centuries. When the

vast processes of creation were in some measure completed God said, "Let us make man." All else seems to be (and science cannot contradict this statement) for the sake of man. Through the centuries since that natal day of man God has been slowly but steadily working at the same great task. It has been slow because God was making a creature for eternity with Himself. By the testimony of archæology we are led to the conclusion that through many centuries man has gradually risen in the qualities that are counted higher. From a position little above the brute in his skill at the crafts and his power over nature he has risen to the splendid position which he holds to-day when earth and sea and air have been subdued to his control. It is probable, but not demonstrable, that he has risen in spiritual, intellectual and moral qualities in the same way and degree. Within historical times we have seen him rising. Through king and prophet, priest and seer and mighty layman, by sudden strides and by long, slow and painful processes, God has been visibly working at the great task of making man—lifting him into a higher, richer, fuller life. Life, elusive and evanescent as it seems, still appears to be the most precious treasure in the universe,

that for which all else came into being. Jesus, in contrasting His mission with that of the teachers who had come before Him, declared that they had devoured the sheep, destroyed the life to gratify themselves, while He had come that the sheep might have abundant life, even though the task of giving it was to cost Him His own. His mission was, therefore, by His own interpretation, to give to men an abundant life. Paul declares that men are God's husbandry, God's building; at the same time he associates himself and other Christian workers with God as fellow labourers with Him in His great task. It seems clear therefore that the task which God set for Himself, the task which He sent His saints and His Son to set forward, the task which He has set us as His co-workers, is the task of producing a full, abounding life in men. This is *the* Christian task; all else is secondary and auxiliary to that.

Life, then, is the primary output of Christian work, and the minister's efficiency is to be estimated chiefly by the amount and quality of life his ministrations are producing. What sort of men is his ministry, his church, his denomination producing, and how many of them? This is the primary question, the question which he as a minister will have to

face when at last he stands before the Father's throne.

The minister is, therefore, a spiritual biologist. His interest is in life. Life he studies, follows it in all its manifold variations and manifestations, seeks to know its origin, nature and characteristics, the laws of its growth and propagation. But he is more than a biologist ; he is also a spiritual horticulturist. His aim is practical. He desires not only to know but also to grow life. It is usually his august privilege to preside at the generation of spiritual life ; upon him devolves chief responsibility for the nurture and the growth of that life. He must provide a favourable environment, furnish suitable spiritual food, protect the tender life from its numerous and dangerous enemies. He must become conscious of the fact that he is growing men, that Bible, church, ordinances, ministry, worship, all are for the sake of man. " All things are yours." Jesus stated this principle with great clearness in speaking of the Sabbath which was at that time the most sacredly regarded of all the Jewish institutions. " Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man," said He. The Jews had reversed this view of the relative importance of man and the institutions of religion. To

them the institutions were sacred and holy ; to Him man was the object of solicitude. According to Him the Sabbath is being properly observed when it is properly serving man, best kept when it is best serving man. And it is for *man*, all men ; not for Jew alone or Christian only, not for churchmen and good men only, but for the good and service of all men everywhere. The Sabbath was made for *man*. The same relation doubtless exists between man and all the other institutions of religion. They do not exist for their own sakes, nor does God care for them in themselves. It is man that He loves and cares for, seeks to save and serve ; and He has established these institutions for the sake of man. All that are of divine origin have value for the life of man, and just so far as they are serving this purpose they are pleasing to God, and no further. It is impossible to believe that God would wish the perpetuation of a thing that had become useless, even though He had Himself instituted it and it had once served a useful purpose ; or that He could have any interest in a ceremony or institution in itself, apart from its useful relations to man. George Fox was right in contending that the ordinances should be abolished unless they have value for the life of

man. He was wrong only in the contention that they have no such value.

If Christian men had been possessed of this conception of the place of man as central, and we may say almost sole, in the divine thought, the course of Christian history would have been vastly different. We should have been spared the shame that now consumes us at every reading of church history. The place of those dark and bloody chapters that tell the story of the persecution of men in the name of Him who died to save them, would be filled by pages made luminous with deeds of love and service. But it was not to be. The institutions grew to be regarded as holy and inviolate. The Church, the clergy, the sacraments, theology, forms of worship, certain days and annual seasons, came to be thought of as the objects of God's concern. They took the centre of thought and reverence. Men fought, burned, butchered *men* for the sake of these *things*. It is a pitiful story of a fatal misunderstanding. Christ came to give life to His sheep, but the shepherds have sometimes killed and destroyed the sheep in His name. The Church was idealized into something holy, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, no matter how debased and unworthy the lives of the men

who constituted its membership might be. To rend the Church came to be considered the supreme sin, while to rend a good man might be a supreme duty. The clerical office and acts were thought to be holy and efficacious no matter how foul the clergyman who officiated might be. The sacraments were believed to exert their redemptive and saving efficacy whether the recipients of these institutions ever manifested a single spiritual trait that should characterize the redeemed life. Indeed the fundamental difference between Catholicism and primitive Christianity lies just here. The former exploited holy institutions, while the latter produced holy men; the former placed the institutions in the centre of thought and effort making men serve the institutions, while the latter put men at the centre and sought to make the institutions serve men.

Protestantism largely shook off the institutional Christianity of the Middle Ages; the Catholics, both Roman and Greek, still cling to it as tenaciously as ever. But the Protestant emancipation was only partial. Who will assert that all Protestant preachers are even to-day consciously putting man and his service at the centre and heart of their thought and effort? With some the

maintenance of a certain type of theology is still the supreme duty of the ministerial life. "Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," is often on their lips; and by "faith" they mean a system of theology, a meaning which is hardly found in the Scriptures. The spirit of martyrdom (to the other man) is under these circumstances often present and manifest. Now, sound, orthodox theology is in itself surely not a bad or dangerous thing. But when a minister comes to think of theology rather than men, it has become to him a most pernicious thing, no matter how "sound" it may be. On the other hand the blessed results which follow the policy of giving supreme attention to men is seen in the success of many men of moderate ability and defective education. They do not succeed because they are ignorant or have not studied in the schools, for ignorance is always a serious weakness; it is rather because the lack of learning has compelled them to appeal directly to men. An education may be given and received in such a manner as to shackle rather than to liberate the mind and heart, and this is a fatal state for a preacher.

As with theology so with the other institu-

tions of religion. Man may be forgotten in the glorification of the ordinance. The spirit of love and service is then likely to take its flight and its place be filled by a spirit of suspicion and fear. Persecution has arisen, and the most cruel, inhuman and destructive treatment of men has been deemed justifiable if thereby recognized ecclesiastical order, custom and belief could be the more securely established.

This attitude as to the relative position and importance of men and religious institutions, it is hardly necessary to say, is the complete negation, the exact contradiction, of the attitude of Jesus. Man held and filled the whole field of His vision. His thought and effort were directed towards man's welfare on earth and his full salvation in heaven. So far as the record informs us He never performed a single ceremonial act prescribed for His people, nor charged one individual to do so as a religious duty. He used the Sabbath to attend the synagogue worship, but never once indicated that there was any sacredness or virtue in the Sabbath, apart from the use that was made of the day. The annual festivals He attended as a boy with His parents and later in His public ministry on His own initiative; but it is perfectly apparent that

these visits were for purposes of learning and instruction. He once bade a man who had just been cleansed of leprosy go, show himself to the priest and offer the gifts prescribed by Moses for the newly cleansed leper; but it was "for a testimony unto *them*," and obviously had no other significance in the thought of Jesus than that it was a legal requirement which must be met before this man could again have access to his friends and society. Holy places, holy days and seasons, sacrifices, circumcision, distinctions in foods, all disappear in that one great saying of His, "God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." If this be true, then a religion acceptable to the Lord God can be universal; and on no other terms could this be possible. The Jewish institutions would have nullified all missionary zeal, and condemned Christianity to the position of a Jewish sect without power or outlook. In the light of that statement of Jesus the institutions of religion may have value, but they can no longer be considered essential. Spiritual worship holds that place. Jesus did not attempt to abolish the Jewish institutions; but He did largely ignore them and did utter truths which under the providential

leading of the Holy Spirit necessarily had the effect of abolishing them among His followers. One who studies this question closely will be deeply impressed with the fact that throughout His life Jesus was thinking of men and cared nothing for institutions except as they served men. It is unthinkable that He should ever have sanctioned religious persecution, that is, the destruction of a man for the sake of an institution. He cared for the man more than the institution.

It was this turning away from ecclesiasticism to man, from ceremonial to life, which brought Him into hopeless conflict with the Jewish authorities and at the same time gave Him His popularity with the masses. Never before had the people heard a teacher who cared more for men than he did for things. It was this element which gave His message its note of universality, vitality and authority, its applicability to every age and people. Because of this quality it is heard still to-day with as much avidity as in the hour of its original delivery.

To-day the world is impressed with this characteristic of Jesus perhaps as never before. The whole atmosphere of our modern life is a-tingle with the ideal of human service. Socialist meetings, labour unions, the daily

press, the political spellbinder, all manner of men, proclaim the service of man as the supreme object of life. The pulpits resound with the awakened sense of responsibility for the moral and social condition of men. There is heard less of theology, church government and such matters than ever before. This is a distinct return towards the purposes and the methods of the Master Himself. The Protestant churches generally, and even the Catholic Church, seem to have awakened to the fact that they have wandered far from the path of human service which their Master trod, far from the spirit and purposes which He manifested, having laid disproportionate emphasis upon institutional matters. *Things* have been exalted into the position given by our Lord to man. The masses have left the churches because the churches have left the masses. The thrill and pulsation of life have not been felt in their bosom. Vital interests have been sacrificed for ecclesiastical. This failure has not been equally flagrant in all, but no church has been guiltless. The selfish interests of ecclesiasticism have more or less pushed into the background the vital interests of men.

What we need to do to-day is to set man where Jesus set him, in the very centre of

our thought and action as ministers. We must come to realize that not the Sabbath only but also all else that we call religious "was made for man." Sacred days, sacred places, sacred ordinances, are sacred only because they serve men; the moment they cease to serve man they cease to please God, no matter how painfully exact may be the ritual. Ecclesiastical actions must be Scriptural in their purpose and relative position as well as in their form, if they are to accomplish the Master's will in them. We can serve God only as we serve men. To believe that the mere performance of a ceremony in a Scriptural form is to please God is to descend to a pagan view of religious ceremonial, where it is thought that the mere performance of the act is the necessary thing. But Christ's view of the basis on which His ostensible followers will be judged at the last day is summed up in the words, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me," and, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto Me." There is here no hint of ecclesiasticism. Human service fills the whole vision of the Judge upon His throne. Men go to the right or the left according as they have served their fellow

men, in ministering to whom they at the same time ministered unto Him. This is not to say that the Quakers are right and all the institutions of religion are useless and therefore to be abolished. Jesus definitely approved them and therefore they cannot be useless. It means only that the essential things are not ceremonial and ecclesiastical, but human and vital.

Let us preachers, then, adopt the vital ideal in the ministry. Not the preservation and propagation of theological systems and ecclesiastical customs and organizations, but fellowship with God in the task of producing a perfect humanity, is our work. We have been called by our Father into that blessed partnership of service whereby we toil to help each individual to realize to the fullest his possibilities, and the race to be more and more. Let us labour to make great men, good men, brotherly men—"till," in the language of Paul, "we all attain . . . unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Let us realize that we are not called of God primarily to serve a denomination, a church, a system or ourselves, but men. Let us steadily remember that the Lord said, "I came that they may have life," and that He sent

us forth into the same task that His Father had given Him, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

This does not mean that religion is to have to do wholly with this world, and that the future is no longer to be looked to as a motive. It is only an effort to look at human life as a whole, and to act upon the faith that the life must get right here if it is to be right on the other side of death. Having received a spiritual birth the soul should go on growing towards full manhood in this life, and who knows if it will not continue to develop in the genial atmosphere of the redeemed in heaven throughout an endless eternity? There all ecclesiasticism will disappear in the glory of God's presence, and here it must be subordinate, being employed to illuminate and not to obscure the face of the Father, or the need of men. Only by adopting this vital ideal in the ministry can we properly glorify God and adequately serve man.

This ideal will bless the preacher and make fruitful his work; the details of method will work themselves out in satisfactory ways. It is the efficiency program. It means that neither time nor thought will be expended on hopeless or unimportant matters, but the whole energy will be directed to the production of complete life in the whole of humanity.

## II

### THE MINISTER IN THE MODERN WORLD

**T**HERE is at present much discussion of the special characteristics of the age in which we live and the difficulties which these conditions create for the modern preacher. The age is thought to be marked off sharply from all preceding ages in many ways. Its knowledge of and power over material nature ; the gradual disappearance of the wonder and mystery of the world through the explanation of natural phenomena ; its materialism and secularism ; its passion for testable knowledge and palpable reality ; its historical and critical spirit ; its skepticism and doubt—these and other characteristics are thought to be markedly pronounced at the present time and to generate an atmosphere that is particularly uncongenial to Christianity. The peculiarities due to the intellectual characteristics of the age are thought to be emphasized and strengthened by the social, industrial and commercial peculiarities. Men live and toil under social

and industrial conditions different from any that have heretofore obtained in the entire history of the world. The tremendous and increasing use of machinery, the massing of capital and the combination of working men, the swiftness of communication and transportation, and many other things have created a complexity of life and mental traits never before known. So it is asserted. To meet these conditions it is implied if not asserted that we must have a new gospel and a new preacher and a new preaching.

Beyond question there is something, possibly much, in these contentions as to the peculiarities of the present age. There has been a material, intellectual, and to some extent a spiritual, revolution in progress throughout the last century. And yet it is doubtful if there has been such a change as is often assumed. Whatever superficial modifications have been wrought in the characteristics of men, fundamentally they remain the same. Those common qualities that make them human beings have continued and will persist substantially unchangeable.

This fact is of the highest importance to the preacher. In the midst of the hubbub about "the modern man," "the modern mind," "the present age," he should never forget

that the essential, fundamental qualities of human nature are universal and practically unchangeable. The avenues of approach to the life will change, but the spiritual needs and their remedies, while differing in degree and application, must always remain substantially the same. The preacher, more than other men, perhaps, needs to remember that the things which divide age from age, race from race, class from class, country from country, sect from sect, are accidental, superficial and ephemeral. They are the most obvious marks of individual differences and class distinctions, but they change. They are to be considered only as helps or hindrances in reaching deeper to the essential things. Catholic, Protestant, Jew and pagan, rich and poor, working man and capitalist, farmer and clerk, all are moved by essentially the same passions, however much they may differ in appearance and externals. They are subject to the same temptations and sins, conscience thunders its prohibitions and commands in the ears of all even if with unequal power, the same fears and hopes and loves darken or irradiate all lives. Men love and hate, hope and fear, sin and repent, fall, struggle and rise again or go down to final and irrevocable ruin as they did in the days

of Abraham and before; and this they will continue to do to the end of time just because they are men. The great books of the most remote antiquity are strangely modern when they deal with the human heart and life. Jewish psalm and Greek drama express alike the passions of the human heart to-day as they did centuries ago. They are in fact timeless simply because man is in essentials changeless. Traditions, culture, environment, religion, occupation, age—a thousand superficial things change, but the essential elements of humanity are universal and permanent. Men are first of all men, and afterwards mechanics or millionaires, Jews or Anglo-Saxons, learned or boorish.

Now the preacher's business is to deal with the very deepest things in human nature, the essentials that are to abide all the shocks that life and death itself may bring. He needs, therefore, to remember above everything else that his hearers are first of all human beings, men and women, endowed with all the common human qualities, and after that members of this or that race, confessing this or that creed, engaged in this or that calling. The minister that speaks to the popular heart is the one who knows how to penetrate beyond superficial differences a

stir the universal human emotions. He does not deal with men primarily as working men, bankers, merchants, Italians, Jews or Americans, but as men with common needs, hopes, fears and sins. Whatever has been essential to any age or race is essential to every age and race ; what has never been essential will never be essential. Only the approach to men changes.

This fact, namely that the preacher needs to consider men primarily and constantly as men with common needs and possibilities, can scarcely be overemphasized. And yet it must also be remembered that age and country have their own peculiarities, more or less marked, which materially affect the manner and readiness with which the Gospel is accepted. Therefore the preacher must strive to understand his own age and field, both their essentials and their peculiarities—his age as it agrees with and differs from preceding ages. This he must do so as to know how to approach the soul with least difficulty and commend with greatest force his Gospel—the essential, eternal, unchangeable Gospel—to the men of his own day. The non-essential but important accidents of life are constantly changing and together they constitute the field through which approach to

the soul must be made. Here there is need for constant vigilance and ready adaptiveness. The greatest, most successful and influential of all Christian preachers said of his message, "We preach Christ crucified." This he continued to do when he knew that it was "unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness," because he also knew that there is for the universal religious need but one remedy, the crucified Christ. To-day one shudders to think what the history of the world might have been had he given way before the popular demand for something else. On another occasion, when he was almost crushed by a tremendous crisis, he cries with burning passion, "Though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."

Notwithstanding this passionate grip on unchanging essentials, he was the most adaptable of men with regard to methods. Or it would be truer, perhaps, to say that just because of his firm grasp of a few essentials he could easily adapt himself in method. Of his methods he said, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them

that are under the law ; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak : I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the Gospel's sake." In these terse sentences we have one of the most striking statements of complete adaptiveness in all literature. There is a great and holy purpose, the salvation of men, to be attained by one sole means, the preaching of the one eternal Gospel, but this is to be done by an endless adaptation of method. Smaller men, who could not understand the unifying principle of Paul's life, must have asked themselves whether he had any principles whatsoever. Acting now as a Jew and again as a Gentile, now as weak and again as strong, he must have been regarded as utterly inconsistent, when in reality it was his single-hearted devotion to the one essential thing which gave him freedom of movement in regard to methods. Most of us grasp too many things, and, therefore, grasp none with great firmness. We speedily find ourselves in a straight jacket of rules which hamper movement and render effective service im-

possible. Grip to the heart of things and hold immovably there ; but be equally ready to adapt in other matters. We do not sufficiently distinguish between the goal and the method of reaching it ; we are as anxious to get it done in a certain way as to get it done. Paul sought to understand each class, sharply differentiated as they were in the Roman world, and by means of that knowledge open the way for the Gospel. To the Jew he became as a Jew, to the Greek as a Greek, to those under the law as under the law, to those without law as without law, to the weak as weak.

If we are to follow this exalted example even distantly, we must seek to understand not only our age as a whole, but also each class to which we minister ; and not only must we understand, we must have the will and the ability to adapt our methods to the changing conditions.

A brief study of some of the characteristics of our age may, therefore, be of value to us. The difficulty of understanding the period in the midst of which one lives is well known, and for this reason as well as because of its great importance the life about him will be the object of the preacher's constant and most searching observation and study. The fol-

lowing short study can be and is intended to be merely suggestive.

1. For its effect on preaching one of the most striking and important characteristics of the present as compared with the past is the general diffusion of education and intelligence and the consequent comparative independence of the intellectual and spiritual life of the people. The public state-supported school has well-nigh banished illiteracy, and the press, supported by the various means of transportation, diffuses information everywhere. Soon, in all the leading nations of the earth, every individual mentally capable of learning to read will be enabled and even compelled to do so. The daily newspaper, the weekly and monthly magazine, the continuous deluge of books, spread some knowledge of the day's doings and the world's thought into every nook and corner of the land. Both the good and the bad, the true and the false, travel on the wings of the wind. The feverish and poisoned breath of the city blows far out upon the land, carrying its load of smut and fouling the fair face of mountain, valley and glen. Knowledge of all the doings of all the world is fast becoming the common property of mankind. The preacher can and must everywhere, except

in the most remote and inaccessible regions, count upon a general acquaintance with the news and movements of the day. Granted that much of this information is superficial and inadequate, still it is of immense importance to the preacher both as a help and a hindrance. He cannot escape or ignore it. It constantly stares him in the face and demands consideration. And all indications point to the continuance and accentuation of these conditions. The preacher of to-day and of to-morrow must expect to address a more intelligent, a better informed and a more self-opinionated congregation than the preacher of yesterday was called to stand before. This fact both simplifies and complicates his problem. A certain degree of intelligence is necessary to any adequate apprehension of the Gospel. Where Christianity finds ignorant savages it must always educate as well as convert, because the acceptance of Christianity and the living of the Christian life is a rational process. In so far the diffusion of intelligence is undoubtedly helpful. The situation demands more intelligent and thoughtful preaching, but it also ensures a more thoughtful and appreciative hearing for really good preaching. It requires more mental and spiritual power, more educational

equipment and training and more general information on the part of the preacher, but it also assures a readier response to preaching that has these qualities.

On the other hand the mental alertness of the present generation materially increases the difficulties of the poorly equipped and unsympathetic preacher. With all sense of his authority as an ecclesiastic gone, with the merest schoolboy in his congregation better informed about the world we live in and the day's doings than himself, with the consciousness that he is being left stranded by the rapidly receding waters of old conceptions, he is often a pitiable figure. He is conscious of swift change in progress all about him, conscious of increasing inefficiency, without being able to understand the causes and probable outcome; he is, as a consequence, filled with anxiety, fear and suspicion, and is liable to become unsympathetic, morose and censorious, thus further unfitting himself to cope with the problems before him.

Again the press, together with rapid communication by automobile, trolley-car and rail disseminates far and wide among the people the *isms* and perversions of Christianity which used to be largely localized. The

poorly equipped preacher is thus frequently brought face to face with situations and views which are strange to him and difficult to handle, and which would have remained unknown to his people a few years ago. Merry-makers from the city are poured into the village streets to disturb the Sabbath quiet and attract the worshippers, to distract if not to debauch the quiet ways of the town.

2. Another marked characteristic of our age is its scientific temper. Most of the natural sciences originated in the last century and a half and all of them experienced tremendous development. They have established for themselves a large and permanent place in the curricula of all types of educational institutions, thus in smaller or larger measure displacing studies that made up the older courses of instruction. The modern mind, in so far as it is educated, is largely made by science, is a scientific mind. And even outside the schools there is a pervasive scientific atmosphere and attitude which envelops our whole life, and deeply affects the uneducated mind as well as the educated.

Some of the striking traits of this state of mind are its passion for fact, its sense of uniformity and law, its attention to the material world, its overweening confidence in its own

methods and conclusions, and its reduction of the field of the unknown where wonder, myth and religion were once supposed to dwell. The scientifically trained man has been taught above all else to seek, test and value facts. The telescope, the microscope, the spectrum, the test-tube, every known device for discovering and testing facts have been put into his hands, carrying him from the unfathomable depths of space to a search for the invisible germ and the atom. He has been taught to distrust the reliability of his own senses, to test again and again, in this way and that, everything which seems to be a fact until there can be no possibility of doubt. He has been taught to doubt in order that he may reach certainty, and when a fact is finally established beyond all possibility of further question, he recognizes it as of ultimate and final value. Explanations may be wholly or partially true or wholly false ; they may change or pass away ; but a fact is real, eternal, so it is claimed.

A mind trained in this way in the classroom will demand reality and fact in religion. It will probably care little for "the pomp and circumstance" of religion, but the pragmatic test of results will be firmly demanded and ruthlessly applied. Speculative

theology will not greatly impress such minds, since it is only the attempted and varying explanation of alleged facts. The past will not be profoundly revered, because these minds have worked in fields of present reality. They will demand that the preacher speak to them with something of the assurance and the attitude of the scientist. Can he do it? If he cannot do so, is there much hope that he can influence this scientific age? There is one line of approach and defense where the preacher stands on almost the same basis as the scientific man. It is by way of the vital, of the experimental, of life. Can he speak on religious questions from his own experience? Is there in his own heart's consciousness the reality of religion? Does he know God, not alone from tradition, not alone through nature, history or revelation, not as a demonstrated proposition, but vitally in his own inner personal experience? Is the life of God consciously in his life? Where personal experience speaks the human heart instinctively responds. Experience is a psychological *fact* with a recognizable scientific basis and value. The preacher of to-day must have a vital experience and must speak a vital message to the lives of men or he had as well remain silent.

He must give to men facts in religion and to these *facts* they will respond.

Another effect of scientific study is the development of a sense of law and order in the universe until many men find great difficulty in believing in the supernatural and the miraculous. Indeed with them the miraculous is itself on the defensive and in need of an apologetic rather than itself capable of serving as an apologetic for something else. Recognizing that this is a fact what is to be the preacher's attitude to the question? In view of the difficulties that beset the modern preacher from this direction it would be well for him to remember constantly the primary purpose of his calling, that is ministration to the life of his hearers. Let him remember that his primary interest is not in the defense of miracle or the propagation of any given theory of the relation of God to the universe. His evangelical doctrines necessarily involve belief in a world-view that puts God in and over the world, able to do in and with it what He will; but the preacher's task is not primarily the proclamation and enforcement of a world-view, but the production of the life of God in the hearts of men. It is far more important that he should be able to imitate his Master in living and speaking in the con-

sciousness of the presence and fatherly care of God than that he should be continually thundering an apologetic for miracle in the ears of his hearers. It is equally as important that he should be able to see God in the ordinary and the usual as in the extraordinary, inexplicable and seemingly supernatural. By far the most of life is cast in the ordinary and the usual, and if God be not here He is in our lives little indeed. The preacher's task is not to prove that God is in the extraordinary, but to produce men whose daily lives shall be an experience of God in the ordinary things of life—men whose words, deeds and thoughts shall be daily pleasing to God. Christianity presupposes miracle, is based in large measure on miracle as popularly defined; the Christian minister believes in the possibility and the fact of miracle of course. But he is not primarily an apologist but a propagandist. Only when apology is itself propaganda can he undertake it; that is seldom.

3. Still another characteristic of our age is its practical bent. It demands to see the practical value of your wares. Its philosophy is pragmatism and it seeks to apply the pragmatic method to everything else. *Cui bono* is its ever recurring question. The

preacher should welcome this test with joy. "By their fruits ye shall know them," was recognized long ago by the Master Himself as a fair test. If Christianity cannot bring forth the fruits of normal, contented, happy, useful and efficient living in the world, it can have little claim upon the men of this life and little promise of the life to come. Christianity can stand the test of results. Its history has many dark and blood-stained pages, but the luminous predominates. The Christian world was ever better than the non-Christian world. It has given the world its saints and martyrs, its discoverers and inventors, its scholars and thinkers, its leaders in all lines of endeavour. In the midst of grossness, materialism, vice and despair it has ever kept the lamp of faith, hope and love burning. Christians have been the knights of the spiritual, conserving, reviving, reforming, improving and propagating civilization. Not all Christians have followed the star, but those who followed the star have been Christians. To-day the same blessed fruits of holy and useful living continue to appear. The drunkard is made sober, the thief becomes a benefactor, the greedy capitalist is converted into a philanthropist. Read Begbie's "Twice-born Men"

and "Souls in Action." Here the power of Christ to redeem the debased is seen, but vastly more important than these abnormal cases is the myriad army of men and women who are daily sustained by this same Gospel in a life adorned with Christian virtue. The fruits of Christian work can be judged by the standard of human perfection or by the actual condition of men where the Gospel has not gone or is rejected. The latter is manifestly the more just and fruitful. Christians are not perfect and are usually very conscious of their imperfection. Indeed one of the most important services which Christianity renders men is the creation in them of the consciousness of their unworthiness, and the stimulation in them of the desire and the ability to strive for and attain the better. They are imperfect, but on the average they are vastly better than the average of the men who are not Christians. The leavening effect of Christianity can best be seen, perhaps, on the mission fields. The fruits of the Gospel there stand out in all their luminous glory and beauty against the dark background of the surrounding heathenism from which the Christians come.

The practical spirit of our age can be in a measure satisfied by the fruits of Christianity,

if we ourselves can only come to realize that Christian fruits are to be produced in the sphere of human life, and bend our energies to the task of their production in this vital field. The real Christian fruits are not in theology, forms of worship, systems of church polity, but in the lives of men. Show this practical world beneficent results in the lives of men, and it will think Christianity worth while.

4. Again ours is an age when all questions are approached from the historic standpoint. Men are not content with knowing a certain opinion or practice as it now is; they insist on asking how and when it came to be so—what forces created it, what opposition was made to it, what else has been related to it. Many a hoary opinion and practice has felt the seriousness of the strain put upon it by this method of study. Dogma has been compelled to justify itself not only to reason but also to historical criticism—a test which has in many cases been much more difficult to stand. To the acid of historical criticism hoary frauds like the Isadorian decretals have been compelled to yield and admit that they were frauds when nothing else could have effected their dissolution. With this rise of historical studies has come the

comparative and historical treatment of religion, enabling and even compelling us to understand, to evaluate, and appreciate the content, power and significance of our own religion over against others more thoroughly than we had before done. Apologetics are being recast in the light of this knowledge and in response to this method. We are being forced back upon the spiritual realities of primitive Christianity, the essentials of our faith. The barnacles of centuries are being cleared away from the keel of the old ship of Zion that she may plow the main of the world's life with more even keel and swifter course. As the unessential is cleared away we shall have more time and opportunity for the essential and vital. The preacher should not fear but rather welcome the historic method, and spirit. They are his allies in escaping from and combatting error, and clearing the way for vital thought and vital effort. As long as his aim is vital there is nothing to fear from these modern tendencies. It is only when he is thinking chiefly of the preservation of received and established customs and thought simply because they have been handed down by tradition that he need have any trepidation. One thing the preacher should never forget

is that the cure for wrong conclusions, misleading and dangerous errors, is further and more earnest investigation, and never the discouragement or suppression of freedom of thought and investigation. "Nothing is finally settled until it is settled right." Nothing but truth can finally endure the fires of investigation and criticism.

5. The final characteristic of our age to be mentioned here is its moral, social and philanthropic earnestness and striving. It is sadly true that vice was perhaps never before so organized and commercialized. Our great cities show depths of infamy and degradation that have hardly been surpassed in history. Conditions are such as to give anxiety to every patriot and lover of his kind, not to speak of devoutly religious men who have additional reasons for deep concern. But to be set over against these deep dark shadows there is much that is luminous. Never before, perhaps, has there been so much willingness to know the real condition of men and so much effort to ameliorate that condition. All public men have suddenly become preachers of righteousness and social service. Newspapers, educators, statesmen, business and professional men, labouring men, socialists, all are unwearied in the ceaseless assertion of

the brotherhood of man and the necessity for the application of the Golden Rule in all the affairs of life. Along these lines the appeals of the pulpit are powerfully reënforced by nearly all the agencies of publicity now operating among men. Even the whiskey trade sometimes feels compelled to attempt the defense of itself on Christian principles, and prates of the poor man's club and need of recreation. In fact it is in some quarters openly and vehemently charged that the pulpit is badly behind the age in its thought concerning the welfare of men, that the Church is either a hindrance or a negligible factor in the fight for better living conditions. It is said that Christians are so deeply interested in the other world that they have no time for thought about means for making this one better. Leading reformers can write whole books in advocacy of moral and social reforms with scarcely a reference to the Church as a force to be utilized.

And yet every one acquainted with Christian history knows that the moral, intellectual and social conditions of mankind have not been overlooked. Christian faith holds that man's soul is immortal, that an eternity of existence lies before him, and it has striven to prepare him for that reality, which tran-

scends all others if it be a reality. And yet it never forgot man's present condition. It is true that the Church has usually pursued the policy of cure rather than that of prevention. But in this mistaken attitude it has been in accord with all similar institutions. Not until very recent years has the prophylactic treatment of the ills of society come into vogue, and it is still the physician's chief business to heal rather than prevent disease. All through the centuries the Church has built and conducted schools, hospitals and other beneficent institutions when there would have been none, so far as we can know, but for the Church. Indeed till within the last century and a half the Church continued to be almost the sole benefactor of weak, ignorant and suffering humanity, and even now these blessed institutions and social strivings are not found beyond the influence of Christianity. In Christian lands society has become so saturated with the spirit of Christ that it now does chiefly through the state and the municipality what the Church alone once did for the uplift of humanity. This revolution in the methods of doing benevolent work has been made necessary by the religious changes which have been ushered in with modern times. Religious toleration,

which is the policy of all modern Christian states, has left a large part of the population outside all church relations and obligations ; denominationalism has divided the religious forces and the state has sequestered ecclesiastical property until there is no religious body representative of the whole of society and able to meet society's needs as the Church of the Middle Ages could do. The Church is no longer coterminous with society and yet all society is vitally related to all benevolent work. Consequently the state, which is the only institution which represents the whole of society, both in its needs and resources, has taken over the major portion of this benevolent work. And yet even to-day nine-tenths of the world's benevolence and benefactions are the work of Christians, and hosts of men and women who repudiate Christianity are the direct products and beneficiaries of the religion they reject. The benevolent atheist, in so far as he exists at all, is distinctly a product of this age, and with the death of the Christianity he hates would lose all the goodness he boasts. Christianity has generated the spiritual power and fraternal spirit which non-Christian society is using and boasting.

For the moral earnestness that pervades

the atmosphere of the present time, for the preaching statesmen like Bryan and Roosevelt, for the press with its myriad eyes and mighty power usually but, alas! not always on the right side of moral questions, for the clubs and leagues and reformers who are constantly goading him and society to diligence in doing good the preacher can devoutly thank God. Jesus Himself said, "He that is not against us is for us." In most moral efforts they are usually not against us but powerfully reënforce the message the preacher has been delivering through the centuries. Thus far they are allies in the task of the world's regeneration. If the evils of the present time are mighty and deeply entrenched in the heart of society, they are nevertheless faced by such an array of moral and religious forces as never existed before. The preacher fights to-day supported by an army of allies such as his predecessors never knew.

There is a sense in which the minister is not of the world. In His great intercessory prayer Jesus says of the men to whose special devotion He was committing the interests of His kingdom for the future, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." Neither He nor they rooted life in the world, or lived according to its ideals.

It was preëminently true of Jesus that He was not of the world, and yet He was in a very real sense more completely of the world than any of His contemporaries. He lived at the very heart of the world's striving and suffering. In the market-place, in the temple and the synagogue, in the home of the Pharisee and the publican, with the rich and with the poor, among the doctors, at the marriage and the feast, in the sick-room and weeping beside the open grave ; surely there was no point of life which He did not touch. He was the most cosmopolitan of men in the midst of one of the most provincial and narrowest of the nations of the earth. No ascetic He. His love of men and sympathy with them made it possible for Him to speak a vital message to all men. A Jew Himself, His message has been the regeneration of the Gentile world. His was the vital ideal and this gave Him a universal message.

In lesser degree, of course, but in the same manner the apostles were not of the world ; and yet He sent them directly into the world, to live and work at its heart. They were to touch all that was human. The world's life is to be their supreme concern. They are to neglect no race nor colour nor condition. The idea of separation from the world has

been greatly abused in the course of the centuries and not by the monks alone. Too often the minister has from the safety of his seclusion looked with complaisance or disgust on the turbid and turbulent stream of the world's life, and in either hopelessness or contempt, has bidden it flow on while he attended to his ecclesiastical duties. Not so the Master. He wept over the self-righteous, hardened and impenitent city, but immediately descended to preach in its streets and its temple and its synagogues, and finally to die at its hands. He groaned in spirit over the bleeding hearts of His friends, but immediately proceeded to the grave and called forth the motionless and silent sleeper whose death was the cause of the sorrow. His neighbours of boyhood days sought to cast Him headlong down a precipice to His death, but He passed through their midst only to go into another city and continue His work. He had compassion on the multitudes scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, and immediately began Himself to be their shepherd.

The minister's sphere is in the world's life. He has been placed in the centre of things; he is "the middle man," as some one has aptly phrased it. Men of other callings deal

with a part of life, he with the whole. If he cannot resist and overcome its temptations and allurements both for himself and others, he should lay down his commission as a minister. Free from the fear of the world's lure, without contempt for its sin and folly, filled with compassion for its ignorance and suffering, with profound sympathy for all its noble strivings, he should walk in its midst not as a man apart but with the life of God in himself and the life-giving truth of God on his lips. He is not simply preparing men for a heaven that is to be, but is labouring to make them fit to live in the world of God that now is. Without cynicism, with courage and hopefulness he toils on, confident that his labours cannot be in vain in the Lord even though the fruit is not immediately apparent. He knows himself to be the minister of life, to be associated with God in the one great task which He seems to have set Himself to do. Life God gave, life men want. For life the preacher prays, to produce life he preaches and toils. Such is the preacher's task, such the ideal that should control his life and work in this modern world.

### III

#### THE MINISTER AND TRUTH

“**W**HAT is truth?” The sneering question of the Roman governor may be asked in all seriousness, and it will be answered with some difficulty. A distinction is sometimes made between fact and truth, the former term applying to things and incidents, the latter to relations. No such distinction is necessary to the purposes of this chapter. By truth as here used is meant simply a statement which corresponds to reality, whatever that reality may be. With this definition in mind let us see what effect the vital ideal in the ministry will have on the minister's relation to truth.

There are men whose sole object in life seems to be the pursuit and discovery of new and hitherto unknown truth. They toil as pioneers and discoverers on the border-land of the known, now and then making a successful incursion into the region of the unknown. Their business is to discover, explore and chart the newly discovered lands

for subsequent travellers and settlers. To men who devote their time and energies to this kind of work we owe an inestimable debt of gratitude. They have laboured in the midst of obloquy and opposition, without other reward than the consciousness of noble effort to discover truth. They have given us most of our knowledge of the universe in which we live and our power over the forces of nature. We cannot honour them too highly, nor can we render those who are now living more sympathy and aid than they deserve.

But the labours of these pioneer discoverers become valuable only when they or other men apply the results of their efforts in a practical way to the various needs of men. The interest of the discoverer is in the truth, that of the other man is in men who are to be served by the truth.

Now the preacher belongs to the latter class. He is not indifferent to the discovery of truth, but that is not his business. His spiritual and intellectual eyes have been sufficiently opened for him to realize something of the dimness of the light that shines about him. He remembered that Paul even with his great native ability and learning, his wonderful religious experience and the illu-

mination of inspiration was yet compelled to write that "we know in part" only, and now "see in a mirror, darkly." With the old Puritan divine he believes that there is more light to break from God's word, and not only from God's word but also from God's world. He feels sure there is a vast, indeed an infinite, field of undiscovered truth lying out before us. As the philosopher long ago thought of himself as a boy playing on the seashore and picking up a particularly beautiful shell now and then while the great ocean of truth rolled before him unexplored, so the intelligent preacher knows that there is a vast field of truth as yet unknown—in fact that we know almost nothing of the heart and essence of things, that which we care most to know.

Moreover he fears nothing that may be dragged out of that dim unknown, for he rests in the confident conviction that all the unexplored regions belong to his God. No genuine discovery is to be feared, therefore, but welcomed as a further and fuller revelation of the character and methods of his God. It is not truth that he fears, but error, not too much discovery, but too little. He rests assured that God made and rules over both the known and the unknown in love and power, and gave us the spiritual powers with which to trace out

and follow His footsteps. It must, therefore, be not only allowable and appropriate, but, as he thinks, obligatory on him and infinitely pleasing to God for man to use his powers in the discovery of truth. He looks about him and backward over the centuries and notes the inestimable blessing which discoveries have brought to mankind. The physical universe has been in some measure conquered, unnecessary and unfounded fears, errors hoary with age and extremely hurtful, have been exploded and have vanished, life has been beautified and elevated. Judged from every standpoint, it seems to him, investigation is to be commended and encouraged.

This is the ideal attitude which, it would seem, ought to have characterized every minister and indeed every Christian throughout the centuries. But how different has been the actuality! Scarcely anything in the whole history of Christianity is more discouraging and disheartening than the incredulity and hostility with which the organized Church has usually greeted the announcement of any great discovery. These discoveries have most frequently been made by devout Christian men, and can, therefore, be justly claimed as the legitimate fruit of the Christian life. In order to estimate Christianity fairly it is

necessary to distinguish between the individual Christian and the Christian organization, the Church. As in other great corporate bodies, the Church has not always been led by its best men. Christianity has better succeeded in making individuals of high character than in creating organizations of that type. The flower and richest fruitage of our religion is seen in individual lives rather than in any visible corporate body. It should not, therefore, surprise us to find an individual Christian sometimes suffering at the hands of the Christian Church.

But whatever zeal for investigation and hospitality to new truth we may find in the individual Christian the Church has never been a discoverer, has rarely if ever encouraged investigation, and has often persecuted the man who dared with impious feet to step outside the beaten path of long recognized and accepted truth. In this attitude of hostility the controlling factor has been the clergy. They have almost uniformly looked with fear and suspicion on newly announced discoveries, and in a solid phalanx fought the discoverer. This was especially true of the Middle Ages and the Roman Church, but other bodies have not escaped this obsession.

And yet it would seem as if no other man

would have so much reason to welcome new truth, so much desire to escape from old error as the minister. He above all other men, it would seem, would have confidence in truth, its value to men in its power to bless. With a proper and adequate faith in God he must also believe that all truth is of God, is necessarily consistent with all other truth, is a further revelation of God and of value to the welfare of man, temporally and eternally. He above others ought to have seen the hurtfulness of error, and the supreme value of facts. He more than others ought to realize that facts are the realities which come from God, while the theories and explanations, the systems, are faltering fabrications of men, constantly liable to change and decay. He should know that a system is helpless before a fact, that one fact inconsistent with a theory is sufficient to effect its modification or even its complete dissolution. Such has not been the case. They have not been able to realize that there remained yet undiscovered truth lying outside their systems.

Whatever may have been true of the clergy of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages such an attitude is certainly most unworthy of a Protestant minister in the twentieth cen-

ture. He at least should have reached a point where he does not fear the light. He must have faith in truth, must not fear truth, must welcome new truth. To use an expression of the Master Himself, when He had just uttered a mass of truth that was to His hearers both new and frightfully radical, he must be "like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52). Without fear, with perfect calmness and intense interest and sympathy the minister should be able to sit before the refiner's fire, watch the test tube, peer through the telescope and the microscope, attend, welcome, encourage all the experiments and efforts of the scientist. Why should he fear? He is convinced that

" In the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadows  
Keeping watch above His own."

This confidence will give him calmness and poise in the presence of opposing views and hostile criticism. Like all other thoughtful men he has a world-view, that is, a set of assumptions from which he starts in all reasoning. They are not the result of a rational process but rather the presuppositions of all

reasoning. He knows they are assumptions incapable of absolute proof; but he knows also that other world-views rest on assumptions equally incapable of proof and equally necessary to the conclusions reached by their advocates. His inner religious experience, his knowledge of the world, his study of the course of history, all seem to him to agree with and confirm the Christian view of God and the world, and he is confident that nothing will overthrow or even seriously affect the integrity of this view. He knows too much of the diversities of men to expect all men to accept his view, but that consideration in no wise alarms or disconcerts him. Secure in the conviction that his own view is fundamentally correct and that profounder study and investigation will only lead men more and more to accept it, he demands for every man freedom of thought, the right of unhampered investigation. That does not mean that men of widely divergent and discordant views should remain in the same ecclesiastical organization, for a certain degree of harmony is necessary to effective Christian activity. Nor does it mean that variant views shall be immune from criticism and effort at refutation. It only means that every man shall have the right in society and

the state to think for himself and to express his honest thoughts, that they shall not be suppressed by force but refuted by argument, and this it does mean with emphasis. This position he takes not only because of the fundamental rights of man, but also because he hopes for further discoveries by these fearless independent thinkers. He remembers how discoverers in the past have been execrated during their lives and almost canonized after death. He has no desire to play any part in the repetition of this sorrowful drama. He does not believe that all truth is known, and feels confident that every truth, new and old, has some power to bless and elevate man.

The wise and confident modern minister, then, encourages investigation and welcomes new truth. But he is not primarily an investigator. His mission in the world is not to discover but to use truth, that is to apply it to the business of producing life. Indeed, strange as it may at first sound, his interest is not primarily in truth at all, but only in truth as the minister to life. His mission is neither the discovery of truth nor the defense of truth, not even the propagation of truth for its own sake. He may as a minister do all these in fact and with propriety,

and the last two functions he must perform. All this he does, however, not for truth's sake, but in the interest of the main matter which is the production and cultivation of the life of men. He must never for one moment forget that he has been sent forth by his Lord to give life to men.

The fatal mistake of supposing that the main business of Christianity was to formulate, preserve and defend the truth has not infrequently been made ; but it can scarcely be doubted that the paramount interest of Jesus and His immediate disciples was in the life of men, not in any body of truth. He was the way and the truth, but only that He might culminate in the life. Not until He reached the life was His work complete. He judged men by their attitude to His Father and towards their fellow men, not by any body of truth they might be holding, except in so far as it might affect this filial attitude. To love God with one's whole being and the neighbour as one's self, that was to fulfill the whole law and the prophets. Such was His thought.

But His free and vital attitude did not long survive in the infant Church. Christianity quickly passed into the custody of the Greeks. Their interest was in truth, speculative

thought or philosophy, far more than in life or the welfare of the people. Ethics and religion, except as an esthetic stimulus, had little value for the Greek. He was usually immoral himself even when profoundly learned. It was doubtless natural that he should have speedily fastened his own intellectual attitude on the infant Church. Gradually a man's intellectual beliefs came to be the standard by which he was judged. Theology established itself as the supreme, and in fact as almost the sole, criterion of the Christian life. A man must be orthodox or suffer the extreme penalties of ecclesiastical and civil displeasure. The kind of life he was living was a matter of secondary importance; he was tried by the truth he professed. As we have seen this was the reversal of the attitude of Jesus and the early churches, and its evil effects soon made themselves manifest. Persecution stalked on to the stage, sectarianism and bitterness rent the Church, moral standards rapidly sank and Christian life became little better than that of the heathen.

The truth was formulated into creeds as a sacred deposit, infallible, unchangeable, universally valid and binding. In this form it was regarded as final and absolute truth, to be permanently preserved from all enemies

and mercilessly turned against all foes. Subscribe to these formulas and all was well ; depart from them and the flames of earth and of an eternal hell were the penalty. Thus men thought and acted almost universally throughout the Middle Ages ; and this is still the attitude of the Roman and Greek Catholic Churches. In fact it is to the present hour the most striking characteristic of these two great Churches. They claim above all else to be *orthodox*, that is, correct in teaching. They have *the truth*, securely packed in creeds and labelled, easily found and always ready for deadly use against men, against life. No other Christian body has laid so much emphasis upon *truth*, no other has made such failure in the production of *life*. Their great mistake has been that they placed truth in the room of life as the object of thought and endeavour, with the woeful result that they have largely made failure of both truth and life. In no other bodies are there such ruinous masses of superstitious and hurtful error, and in no other is the standard of Christian living so low. This condition is no accident, but is the direct and immediate and inevitable result of the mistake of putting truth in the supreme place given by Jesus to life.

The true minister will, therefore, shun this great and specious danger as he would the blight. On the other hand he will not make the equally serious mistake of being indifferent to truth, of believing that one opinion is as good as another. He knows that no error can be as valuable for life as the truth. Truth is the food of the soul, and as such is of supreme importance to every man who would nobly serve the life. As it is the business of the minister to serve the life he must know and know how to use the truth. Just as the world to-day has the most intense and practical interest in the purity, value and effects of the various kinds of foods in the building and sustaining of the body, so the preacher cannot fail to be interested in the food of the soul. Sanitation, nourishment and exercise are as necessary to spiritual health, growth and strength as to the welfare of the body. Providing these conditions of vigorous growth is the minister's work, and he cannot, therefore, be indifferent to the soul's food, if he be a worthy man. He will seek the truth, winnow out the error, be satisfied with nothing but the truth. He may be responsible to some ecclesiastical organization for the presentation of a certain type of theology and ecclesiastical opinion, but he

is responsible to God and the souls of men for the presentation of the truth and nothing but the truth, the pure, unadulterated food of the soul. It is a solemn responsibility which cannot be lightly assumed by any man who seriously considers his duty. Reflection on these facts should make the minister a most diligent truth-seeker—a seeker after the truth in order that he may be a minister of the truth to the life.

The preacher's interest in truth is pragmatic; he cherishes it for its value to life. This leads him to make sharp distinctions among truths, so as to be able to put them to use according to their respective values. He has been called of God and men mainly to cherish the moral and religious elements of man's nature. Society has provided the school to care for the intellectual development of the race, and the means of ministration to the physical man are numberless. There is comparatively little that the preacher needs to do or can do here, other than generate an atmosphere of divine and human love that will demand justice and kindness in all social and economic relations. He cannot of course be indifferent to men's physical welfare. That is a part of the specific problem to whose constant solution he has been

called. But he must reach and contribute his share to that solution in the way which is appropriate to his own place and calling, that is through the infusion of life and vigour into the spiritual nature. He is working towards an ideal, not on a program. It is granted to him to contribute powerfully to the making of men with right purposes and the ability to carry them into effect ; statesmen and economists must carry through the program. This practical work is in modern times done mainly through the state and municipality. The modern preacher is thus left free from principal responsibility for the training of the mind and the care of the body, except as he creates an atmosphere friendly to these tasks. But he is charged with almost exclusive responsibility for the care of the moral and religious nature of men. This is due to the exclusion of moral and religious instruction from the state schools in America, to the growing disposition to neglect this instruction in the home. The church and the Sunday-school, led by the preacher, are thereby assuming an importance in the religious life of Americans that they perhaps never had before.

In meeting this grave responsibility the minister will choose those truths for presenta-

tion which best serve the purposes and ends of his calling. It is his duty and privilege to bring men to know God and feed their lives from this eternal source of all life. He will avoid the trivial, the unimportant, the ephemeral, however true they may be, and drive straight at the heart of the eternally important. The affairs of the kingdom of God and the life eternal are of such transcendent importance and the opportunities for addressing men on these themes are so infrequent and brief that no time should be lost on the unimportant. Judged from this standpoint, and it is undoubtedly the correct one, how much irrelevant matter is sometimes presented in the modern pulpit! What value, for example, have curious questions of literary criticism for the temporal or eternal welfare of the average man? The question as to whether there are one or two Isaiahs has about as much bearing on his life as the discussion of the chemical composition of the planet Mars. So with most of the other critical opinions which some dapper young theologues and a few older preachers whose age has not increased their wisdom, feel compelled to air on occasion. Brilliant and startling attacks on long and widely cherished views may call forth a momentary news-

paper notoriety and even provoke a heresy trial, but will never save a soul or build up the life of a man. If ministers kept constantly before them the supreme object of their high calling, the production of life, and really cared for this unique privilege, we should be spared such dazzling spectacles. Negations sometimes clear the ground for the building of life, but they make no direct contribution thereto. Nature hates an intellectual or spiritual vacuum as much as a physical one, and usually destroys it or penalizes its presence in the same way as in material nature.

Equally futile and barren is the defense or advocacy of views that have no vital significance to either preacher or hearers, on the ground that they are old and orthodox. They may even be true and may have filled an important place in the life of men in the past when conditions were different ; but if conditions have so changed as to render them relatively useless for the life of men to-day the wise preacher will omit them. He is to build the life and must choose his message to that end. It is not established views of Scripture or subscription to creeds that give life to the soul, but knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, brought home to the hearts of

men by the passionate earnestness of a preacher fired by a heart conviction. Such truth gives life. Official ecclesiastical orthodoxy may be just as barren of the fruits of the Spirit and the graces of the Christian life as the most radical liberalism. To see that this is historically true one needs only to turn his eyes to the Orthodox Church of the East, or to those periods in the history of any of the modern churches when most emphasis was laid on orthodoxy. They are never the periods of greatest harmony, holiness and activity. The periods of vital preaching are the periods of Christian power.

Thoughts of other things are constantly thrust on men by the exigencies of their daily lives, while there is little to recall them to God. They have little time to learn to know God and themselves, sin and the Saviour, this world with its duties and the eternity that lies beyond. It must also be admitted that most men have all too little inclination to reflect on these things. These are, therefore, the thoughts, meditations and aspirations that ought to speak especially from the pulpit. Silence would be better than the barren, blatant, negative criticism, or the dry, dreary, droning polemics that are sometimes heard there. If the preacher would only remember

that his mission is to life such subjects would not be treated in the pulpit. They have their place no doubt. Let the preacher do his share in the world's intellectual battles, for such battles must be fought. But in the pulpit we want food, not powder and ball, no matter which direction the gun may be pointed. In the pulpit let us seek to build up life, not to kill and destroy, and let us select our truths accordingly. Not truth for truth's sake, but truth for life's sake ; not all truth, but relevant truth ; not official truth, but vital truth, truth of highest worth to the life of men—this is the truth which the minister who is furnished to every good word and work will discover and present.

## IV

### THE MINISTER AND THEOLOGY

WE live in an age when Christian thought is in a state of solution more complete than at any time since its crystallization in the fourth and fifth centuries. Dogma in the old sense of the final authoritative statement of religious truth has almost disappeared from the Christian world outside of the Catholic Church. The whole of Christian thought is again in the crucible. The Protestant churches are radically changing creeds that have stood the strain of centuries, and some bodies, as for example the Baptists, repudiate all statements of doctrine except as confessions of their faith to be used for purposes of information and instruction. Even the systematic presentation of religious beliefs in the form of systematic theology has fallen into confusion and even into disfavour in some quarters. The old statements no longer satisfy multitudes of people, but as yet no satisfactory new forms have been found to supply the de-

facts of the old. Theology seems to be trying to get on a new basis, to approach its theme from a new direction and to justify itself by a new method. But as yet it has not attained. It is hesitating, uncertain, confused. The old is going and the new is coming, but neither process is sufficiently advanced to be able to forecast the result. One theologian goes in one direction and another in another ; there is no concerted or harmonious movement in any direction. This confusion and hesitation come just at a time when science, history and other fields of thought are showing most progress, activity and assurance.

1. When we inquire concerning the causes of this strange phenomenon several possible partial explanations suggest themselves. In the first place theology was the first of the sciences to be developed. Men were interested in and reflecting on God and man and their relations to each other long before they took up the other questions with which modern man is so largely engaged. Speculative theology will scarcely ever go beyond the great systems of the past. In an age largely given to philosophic thought this theology, so widely and minutely developed in all directions, was thoroughly satisfying.

Theology was known as "the queen of the sciences" long before the so-called natural sciences had begun their triumphant career. It was justly entitled to this preëminence, for more thought and effort had been expended upon it than upon all other fields of thought combined. Men lived and moved in an atmosphere surcharged with theological speculation. With the outbreak of the Renaissance this began to be changed. Interest in other matters began to dispute the supremacy of theology. Slowly but surely and irresistibly history, a non-theological philosophy and the sciences claimed a larger and larger share of the thought and attention of mankind. Theology, which had so long been supreme, could brook such upstart rivals with no good grace. It was thrown on the defensive, became suspicious, combative and oppressive. Unable to keep its leadership by intellectual superiority it resorted to forcible repression. As a consequence it became static, stagnant and reactionary. The rest of the world swept gloriously onward while it stood by the wayside glowering at the progress it could not prevent, still vehemently asserting its claim to finality and supreme authority over other realms of thought. This claim the rest of the world

could at length afford to spurn. This it did, and toiled on with its own fascinating task, leaving theology to point proudly backward to its own great attainments in the past. The very glories of that past throttled the possibility of progress, and thus became the occasion of its own downfall. Too proud to recognize rivals or acknowledge the possibility of further development two centuries and more were required for it to learn that humility which was necessary to its revival and rehabilitation. That time has at length come. It now modestly admits that it is neither final nor infallible, and has as a consequence begun a reconstruction in the light of all that the world now knows.

The Teuton and Anglo-Saxon of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have begun to claim that they have reached their theological majority and are capable of writing their own theology. They no longer feel compelled to accept as final the work of the Greek and Latin theologians of the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages and the earlier centuries. They frankly recognize the greatness and importance of the work done by those fathers, but they assert their own right and even their duty to question both its form and contents. The ancient world made mis-

takes in other matters, they say, why not in theology? They were Catholics, we are Protestants; their knowledge of the world was far more limited and imperfect than ours; their methods of study were inferior to ours; the religious life and experience about them, forming the spiritual atmosphere in which they worked, was much less vital than ours. All this, it is claimed, gives the modern theologian the right and in fact lays upon him the obligation to think the whole field of theology through afresh as every other field of thought has been reinvestigated in modern times. Otherwise, it is felt, theology will lose all hold on the thinking men of the present and be thrown on the scrap-heap as a system of thought at length outworn and useless. It is admitted that it would doubtless be cherished a while longer by the uncultured and backward; but ultimately they would give it up, for that which thinking people have finally discarded will infallibly lose its significance for all. Theology must, therefore, it is claimed, be reworked or lose all influence on modern life.

Now whether one agrees with these assertions or not he must recognize the fact that they constitute a powerful plea, and further that they are actually leading men to do the

work for which they claim the right. They are actually at work afresh on theology, not simply restating the old Catholic doctrines in modern language, but also inquiring with all possible diligence, in the light of all we know and all we think we know to-day, whether the ancients did not fail to apprehend the whole truth or did actually make theological mistakes.

2. Another fact in the history of theology has doubtless contributed to this desire for change. The mind of the ancient world, in so far as it was cultured, was formed chiefly by the study of literature, philosophy and law and in the Middle Ages by the last two. The studies that are chiefly instrumental in moulding the modern mind were as yet largely non-existent. And it is an indisputable fact that all the great theologians down to and including the period of the Reformation were trained in the law. The Roman Empire within whose borders and under whose influence most of our theology was formulated was the great developer and custodian of law in the ancient world. During the Middle Ages canon law was a very important study for all theologians. Under these influences and with this culture it is not strange that theology was formulated almost

exclusively in legal terms and forensic conceptions. The relation between God and man was conceived as a legal one. Paul had been trained in the Jewish law and constantly used legal terms in expressing his conception of the relations of God and men. Some of these terms which at once occur to the mind are law, election, justification, redeem, redeemer, redemption, ransom, adoption, heir, inheritance and others. The great Latin theologians of the earlier centuries such as Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose and Augustine were all able and learned lawyers. They all conceived religious truths in a legal way and expressed them in legal terms. Moreover their statements became normative for later ages. The Latin language became the sacred language of worship and all ecclesiastical learning. Latin law terms fixed theology for centuries. In the Middle Ages Anselm, Aquinas, Duns Scotus and all the other creative minds both used the Latin language and were deeply versed in canon law. Strangely enough when we come to the Reformation the same is found to be true. The two great creative minds were Luther and Calvin and both were deeply versed in law, in fact had intended to follow the law as a profession. Very many of the men of lesser

calibre and significance were likewise lawyers. Under these circumstances it would have required a constant miracle to have prevented theology from being expressed in legal conceptions and terms. It was just what was needed at that time, fitting the social conditions as well as the current culture. Theology could not have been so vital to the people if expressed in any other terms or conceptions.

It is far otherwise now. Law has little importance as an instrument of culture. Its purpose is purely practical, and the lawyers form a small class of society. There is nothing among Protestants in any measure corresponding to the canon law in which the theologians of the Middle Ages had to be carefully trained. In fact the great majority of the theologians of the last century and a half have never studied law in any form. A new culture has arisen and by that the mind of the modern theologian has been moulded. Mathematics, the classics, history and the sciences have fixed the nomenclature and determined the forms of his thought. He has been taught to be suspicious of speculation, to doubt what he cannot test. Of law he has little knowledge and for it cherishes no great respect. He has as little dealings with it as

possible. It is mechanical and remote from his life, frequently a positive hindrance to social progress and remedial legislation. Governmental relations and work are not sufficiently personal and vital to serve him as molds and imagery for his religious convictions, feelings and aspirations.

Religion itself has been greatly spiritualized and deepened since the work of the medieval Catholic and the Reformation theologians was done. Social conditions have so changed that many of the terms in use formerly are no longer applicable. The modern man thinks in terms of biology, life, science and social relations. He conceives his relations to God and his fellow men in a much more intimate and vital way than the ancients. They employed the analogies of law and the state to express the relations that exist between God and men ; but to him those of life and the family seem better fitted for this purpose. It was, therefore, inevitable that the old theology with its philosophical speculations, its legal terminology, its scholastic and dialectic definitions and divisions, its externalized conceptions, should seem to him *a priori*, external, mechanical and remote from life and experience. He wants to come into more intimate relations with God than

legal terms and conceptions will admit him. He wants a theology expressed in such terms as he can understand—that is, terms drawn from life, the family and science.

3. Systematic theology has always been intimately related to current philosophy, and has reflected more or less completely the changes and conditions of the latter. Now, since Kant, philosophy has been in considerable confusion. There has been nothing of the unity and assurance of the Middle Ages. Men have been in uncertainty as to what could be known and how the knowable could be mastered. They have felt suspicious of speculation and have felt themselves compelled by science to rely upon experience. The philosophic basis and method of the old theology have fallen into disfavour. Naturally theology itself has felt the shock of these changes in its old ally. It too has fallen into uncertainty and confusion.

4. Another influence which has undoubtedly operated largely in bringing theology to its present position has been the tremendous interest in historical studies during the last century. The history of theology has been investigated. It has been found that every doctrine has had a history, a growth, or, to use a scientific term for a very familiar ex-

perience, an evolution. Men have not always, everywhere, believed the same thing or anywhere near it. Moreover some of the chapters in this history have not been of a character to commend the conclusions to the confidence of men. Both the historic method and the historical conclusions have modified the conception of the finality and authority of dogma. It has been more difficult to accept the dogma when one knew its history.

5. The scientific method, which is the special mark of the intellectual life and training of modern times, is also exerting a very great influence on theology. The old method was *a priori*. "Aristotle was king in Zion." Conclusions were reached by the methods of deductive logic. From generals men descended to particulars. It was the method of philosophy and theology. To-day Bacon is almost king in Zion in so far as method is concerned. Inductive logic insists with considerable success that it is the only legitimate method in philosophy and theology as well as in science. Every conclusion must be at least tested by experience and if possible should be reached and built up by the inductive method. This insistence has put a great strain on both philosophy and theology. So powerful is science that the demand can-

not be evaded or ignored, and yet how can it be applied? That has been the embarrassment of theology for many years. Some theologians frankly say that there can be no truly scientific theology, and the scientist immediately answers with emphasis that, if this be true, then there can be no theology at all. Theology has not yet transcended this embarrassment as to method and reached firm ground again. Until that is accomplished there will certainly continue to be hesitation and little progress in theological reconstruction. A theological method, recognized as legitimate, is the need of the hour.

6. Other phases of our modern life have contributed to the present chaotic state of theology. The intense study of the Bible and its ever increasing prominence in the religious life of the last century have forced it into a more influential position in the production of theology, as well as changed the manner of its use in that science. A Biblical theology has arisen, and with it has declined the disposition to produce a systematic theology whose chasms are bridged by speculation. Men have been more inclined to stop where the Bible stops and they have learned much better during the last century where the Bible does stop. Biblical theology has

thus in some measure discredited or weakened systematic.

7. The evangelical character of the Christianity of the nineteenth century has elevated Christian experience, especially that of the emotional type, to a position it never held before. Christian experience is insisted on not only as a factor to be reckoned with in the construction of theology, but as its norm and basis. Not only must theology conform to experience, it is thought, but must even grow out of and not go beyond experience. The scientific method of inductive study has measurably strengthened this tendency. It is not sufficient that theology should satisfy the intellect; it is required that it should conform to religious experience and thus become a vital force in the life.

8. The democratic trend of modern times has emphasized and intensified this tendency. It is scarcely possible that the theology of the Middle Ages should have much affected the masses. They were ignorant and considered worthy of little attention either by lord or theologian. Theology was for the school and the class-room, for the scholar, and the clergyman. That is changed now. The common man has come to his majority and must be heard. He is interested in the-

ology, he holds the strings of the purse whose contents are necessary to make the work of the kingdom go under our modern voluntary system. He must be considered, and he demands a theology that reaches his own life and bosom. Preachers and theologians have been compelled to listen, and, let us believe, have been glad to listen. Theology has thus been democratized and vitalized in the same movement. The effort is now on to bring it into intimate and vital relations with all of modern life.

9. As the counterpart to this tendency to stress experience, the modern passion for testable facts has worked towards the disintegration and discredit of theology. Much of its content cannot be subjected to the ordinary tests of experience. The inevitable result has followed—an agnostic attitude towards many positions that were asserted with all possible confidence a few centuries ago. This decline of dogmatic certainty does not necessarily mean a decline of faith, but only a more modest estimate of the triumphs of the intellect. The medieval theologians were gnostic and confident, the modern are less confident and perhaps more modest. They are not so sure that they know all about the nature and plans of the Infinite as were

their predecessors. As the knowledge of the immensity and complexity of the universe and the inexplicable doings of God in history has broadened and deepened, reverent lips have become less ready to speak. Increase of knowledge has increased the sense of greatness and mystery in the universe, and laid boasting lips in the dust. The assurance of the old theology concerning the attributes, purposes and work of God, the condition of the human soul and much more, is no longer shared by modern Christian men. The old assertions were in large part built on the then current philosophical speculations and presuppositions as to what such a God as ours must be and do. These statements were then buttressed by Scripture quotations which were often misunderstood or misapplied. The conclusions were not drawn from Scripture but only fortified by its use. The modern Christian man is utterly agnostic about much of this. He knows that he does not know and he does not believe the ancients knew. He is not disposed to speculate himself nor to follow the speculations of others very far, even though those speculations are hoary with age and have been crystallized into creeds and theological systems. He is much more inclined to stop with facts that are his-

torically and scientifically and experientially testable. These facts are sufficiently abundant to satisfy his spiritual needs and support his Christian hopes. He has become a Christian agnostic. He has no interest in going beyond that which is written and experienced. He is tremendously interested in this world and its uplift. He looks about him and sees that the simple Gospel has power to save and transform men, and he is content to stop there.

10. A further phase of our present religious life must not be forgotten. The modern missionary movement for the conversion of the non-Christian world, along with the intensified endeavours for the evangelizing and social uplift of the masses at home, have exerted a profound influence upon theology. They have emphasized the love of God for the entire race and His efforts for their salvation and welfare. The old theology said that the justice of God must be satisfied ; the new affirms that His love must be satisfied. How can men believe in election in the old sense when they have come to believe profoundly that it is the will of God that the whole race should be redeemed ? How can they believe that divine justice is retributive and penal when the purpose of punishment in our world is, according to advanced modern views,

chiefly if not wholly corrective? Thus men question their hearts. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were filled with war, hardship and suffering. Social and international injustice made men stern and unsympathetic. They were compelled to fight for life and all that life holds dear. Under these circumstances it is not strange that the great theologians of this period gave to God's justice the supreme place in their systems, building on the righteous and sovereign if not arbitrary will of God. The idea of human *rights* and especially the dignity and rights of the individual, was almost non-existent. All government was a despotism in which the actions of the ruler were limited only by his power and self-interest. The individual possessed no other political, social nor religious freedom or significance. Society was on a tooth and claw basis. Under these conditions it was inevitable that theology should be harsh, stern and aristocratic. God loved men, it was thought, but only the men whom He had elected to salvation—an election which was in no way related to the faith or character of the individual. The view that Christ died for none but the elect and that all the rest of mankind are perfectly helpless and wholly unable to escape eternal damnation did

not shock the moral sense of that age. It was almost universally accepted without question or protest. A change in social conditions has brought about a similar change in theology. The modern passion for humanity, for the welfare of all men irrespective of race or condition, has now made such a theology well-nigh impossible. Men have been unable to give themselves in love and service to all men and at the same time believe that God has passed by a large part of the race without providing any way of salvation; much less can they believe that God has actively blasted them forever, "to the praise of His glorious justice." With his high views of the worth of a man it is hard for the modern to believe that such a course would be to the praise of God's justice. Indeed, to be perfectly frank, he does not believe that such a course would be either just or loving. That conception of God has not been able to survive in our modern atmosphere of service and has in fact disappeared from among most of those who still call themselves Calvinists. They are Calvinists in only a modified sense. As yet no consistent system has come to take the place of the old, and present-day theology hangs suspended between heaven and earth, unable to ascend or descend with comfort.

These and other considerations have had a most profound influence on theology. In the olden days it was the "queen of the sciences." The great universities of Europe and the denominational colleges in America were built upon it. The professorship of theology was the most honoured in all our seminaries. Much of the preacher's duty in the pulpit was the defense and propagation of a certain system of theology. The pew, where it was free to select, chose its minister largely for his ability as a theologian. The officials sat in rapt and critical attention while the minister delivered long theological disquisitions which a modern congregation would scarcely tolerate. All this is now gone. Does the change mean a religious declension? Undoubtedly many good people think so. But this is not necessarily the case. It signifies a shifting of emphasis, but it may be, and in the judgment of many good people is, a gain rather than the contrary. In the old days the chief religious interest was intellectual, now it is vital; then the highest concern was directed to the way men thought, now the stress is on the way men live; then emphasis was laid on theology, now it is on spirituality, ethics and philanthropy. Then the congregation in-

quired if the minister was a sound and able theologian, now it investigates his ability to build up the moral and religious life of the church and community.

Now in view of and in the midst of these changes, already great and still in progress, what is the modern minister to do? What is to be his attitude towards theology? Is it to have any place in his training and work in the future? Does Christianity need a systematic theology or have we passed entirely beyond the theological stage of its history?

It is hardly necessary to say that these changes have not come without protest. No such radical transformation ever came in any department of the world's life without serious challenge, and this is especially true in the conservative realm of religion. The theological attitude has had a long and honourable history. Very early in the career of Christianity the standard by which a Christian was to be judged came to be an intellectual one. He must be intellectually "sound," hold a "sound theology," in a word, be "orthodox." Faith came to be, not the acceptance of the person Christ Jesus, but the approval of a creed. Among the Greeks whose interests were intellectual, vital

issues disappeared behind intellectual ones. Morals, service, life, ceased to be standards of judgment as they had been, preëminently, in the thought and ministry of Jesus. The creeds and systems of theology arose demanding allegiance and speedily found it. So it was throughout the Middle Ages and still is among the Greek and Roman Catholics. The Reformers wrote new creeds without discarding or modifying the old, and continued the demand for allegiance. This demand they sternly enforced by appeal to the civil arm. Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Congregationalists, Baptists, Anglicans, Catholics, all parties suffered at the hands of others at one time or another, and chiefly because of their theology. Their intellectual conception of the Christian religion, not the character of their lives or actions, was the cause of this suffering. In some Christian bodies, as we have seen, this intellectual standard still prevails. The emphasis is still on the teachings. At the same time there is in most Protestant bodies, and to some extent in the Roman Catholic Church, a decided change in the place of emphasis in recent years. At the same time only a part of any of the denominations are so affected, and as a consequence deep clefts

are seen in the fellowship of many communions, made by the movement of some and the stability of others of its communicants.

What, now, is the minister to do in these perilous and trying times of theological transition, when ecclesiastical bands are straining and snapping and theological scaffolding is swaying and falling? There is danger that he will be too theological, conservative and reactionary, or swing to the other extreme and repudiate all theology—danger that he will be theologically strong and dry, or theologically weak and consequently shallow and feeble. What is he to do?

In the first place let him realize that there is no occasion for alarm. Realities have not changed and will not change. God is the same Father that He has always been, man the same sinful and needy creature. Let him believe in the theological toilers of to-day as much as those of the earlier centuries. They are no less able, no less sincere. They have the same material for the construction of a theology that the ancients possessed and more beside; they work in a better atmosphere, in a period of far greater Christian activity and higher Christian character; they are trying to write a theology for the modern world which will grip the man of

to-day as that of the Middle Ages gripped the men of that time. In their work they are seeking to take into consideration the whole circle of knowledge and follow present-day methods so far as they can be applied to the subject, that there may be no failure of appeal because of fault in knowledge or method. It would seem impossible, when all these advantages are considered, that anything but good could ultimately come out of the current effort at restatement.

But far more important than these reflections is the thought that the preacher's business is not theological at all except in the most incidental way. The vital ideal will greatly help him here. If he keeps steadily in mind that his work is the building up of the life of his people the occasion of much of his fear, uncertainty and anxiety will disappear. "I am come that they may have life," not that they may have a sound theology. The Arminianism of Wesley and the moderate Calvinism of Whitefield were equally effective in the pulpit, when uttered by a powerful personality filled with a passion for God and humanity. There are certain great religious facts whose acceptance with deep conviction are absolutely essential to efficiency in the ministry ; but the manner in which

these are fused into a system is of no material weight in the work of the ministry. The early non-theological years of Christian history were among its most triumphant. The minister need not, therefore, be anxious about the chaotic condition of theology to-day. It is an incident of the readjustment that had to come and will be set right by the scholars while he, the preacher, is earnestly engaged in the work of making men.

At the same time it must never be forgotten that Christianity has an intellectual side and that every rational Christian will have a theology, that is a body of Christian truth more or less fully systematized. Moreover the richer and fuller this truth and the more completely it is systematized the better it is. No man was ever weakened by the extensiveness of his knowledge of religious truth or the thoroughness with which it was organized. The danger to the preacher does not consist in the possession of truth or the systematizing of truth, but in making a system of truth or supposed truth an end in itself—a feeling that he is called to defend and propagate that system rather than build up the life of those men, women and children who are committed to his care. The moment the preacher assumes this attitude, thus losing

touch with the life of men, his proper pulpit power is gone, even if every sentence he utters contains an important truth. It is a fatal defect in the theology of the preacher when it has no vital touch with the life of other men. It is equally defective if it is not the outgrowth of his own Christian experience. The working theology of the pulpit cannot be handed down by tradition, already finished, tied up and labelled. Such a product usually is dry and musty in the pulpit, and contributes very little to the life of the people. He may have received it as the final truth, honoured of his fathers and dear to the saints in the past, and yet it may have little more relation to his own spiritual life or that of the men of his generation than a proposition in Euclid. The theology is not his own. He took it whole from his predecessors. He has the "form of sound words," but none of the substance and red blood that the generations who made these "forms" put into them. The preacher needs a theology that is his own; one that has grown out of his own life and experience and contains his own best thought. He can no more get a valuable working theology out of books alone than he could get geometry by memorizing propositions, figures and demonstrations. A vital

theology comes only through the vital processes of living, thinking and expressing religious truth for one's self.

This making of one's own theology is not an easy task. It requires work, toil of the most exacting kind. But hard as it is the preacher ought resolutely to determine to preach nothing which he has not himself brought to the test of his own experience and wrought out on the anvil of his own heart. He will be tempted to take the easier and (yes, let us recognize the fact) the safer road. He knows that a certain traditional theology is necessary to his good standing and possible advancement in ecclesiastical circles. His own living and that of his loved ones depends on his ability to earn a support in his ministerial calling. How near lies the temptation to cowardice ! Or mental inertia may be his weakness and the fear of the necessary toil may frighten him into the appropriation of the labours of the fathers without the trouble of mental mastication and assimilation. Or the multitudinous distractions of the modern pastorate may deter him from all real mental effort. In any case his theology will be devoid of vitality and power in the pulpit. Such theology is no longer truth, for religious truth is living and active and

sharper than any two-edged sword. When the life is gone out of it there remains only the bleaching skeletons of departed truths, once beautiful and powerful but dead and useless. He may be as zealous for it as if it were still alive, but its powerlessness is in no wise altered by that fact.

In all this it is not intended to claim that the modern preacher must discard the old theology and proclaim something that is called new in order to be powerful. The new may be appropriated in the lump and be just as undigested and useless as the old. The presumption is certainly in favour of that which has stood the test of centuries and has satisfied the mental and spiritual needs of millions. What is said here is not in the interest of either the new or the old as such, but of the true and the vital. Neither age nor youth is a proof of worth and vitality, so far as a system of theology is concerned. What is insisted on is the necessity for vitality in the preacher's theology, whether it is new or old. It must come out of his own life, express his own deep convictions, utter his own personal religious knowledge and experience. The preacher cannot be satisfied with theological negations. It must express his positive convictions.

These and other theological mistakes will be avoided if the minister will only remember that his duty is to minister to the life of the people, that his calling is vital and only incidentally theological. Seeking to vitalize the people, his efforts will undoubtedly react and vitalize his theology. He will deliver a message that is not meant primarily to save theology, but the people. And the people will respond and his theology will be saved. The richer, fuller and more systematic he can make his message the better for his people. But let him never forget that he is delivering it for their sakes, and he will then be careful to present it so as to bless them. Considering the interests of his people he will not proclaim a truth because it is in his system, but only because of its probable beneficial effects on his charge; it will not appear in scholastic but in popular form. The methods pursued in one congregation will in another be exchanged for others that promise better results in vital power. In one this truth will be emphasized, in another that, according as there is need. But always the people will be uppermost in his thoughts, for he will steadily remember that his Master said, "I am come that they may have life"; and further said, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

## V

### THE MINISTER AND THE SERMON

THE importance of preaching in the work of the kingdom of God can scarcely be overestimated. This public presentation of religious truth by word of mouth was the method of the old prophets, it was the plan of John the Baptist and Jesus ; Luther, Knox, Wesley and all other great Christian leaders have accomplished their splendid tasks mainly by preaching. Periods of aggressive and vital piety have always been characterized by diligent and effective preaching ; and conversely vigorous evangelical preaching has not failed to call forth a Christianity with vision and power. By the testimony of English historians the preaching of Wesley regenerated eighteenth century England, and saved it from the horrors of a cataclysm like the French Revolution. This wonderful work, surpassing in magnitude that of any statesman of modern times, was almost wholly the effect of incessant, evangelical, vital, practical preaching, extending to every nook and corner of the land.

Ours is a reading age. Never before in the world's history has the printed page filled so large a place in the life of the people. In the enormous literary stream there is a large element of distinctly religious literature—periodicals, tracts and books. By far "the best seller" in the world's output of books is the Bible, and yet all this religious literature has not and will not replace preaching or greatly reduce its importance. "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). The Christian religion is of such a nature that it needs the advocacy of personality for its propaganda.

Furthermore, ours is an age when the science and art of teaching is being studied and practiced with unwonted diligence. The teacher is coming to be regarded as the most important personage in the body politic. Education is universal. Naturally and properly this intellectual movement has passed into religion, and is to-day deeply affecting all our Christian work and ideals. The Sunday-school has multiplied the number of religious teachers and increased the amount of religious teaching to enormous propor-

tions. But with all the blessed results of this work already apparent and the further benefits anticipated, it can never take the place of that method which is distinctively called preaching. As a matter of fact these various types of Christian activity are an admirable preparation for the more effective presentation of truth from the pulpit. The well furnished minister ought to be apt to teach, for teaching is an important feature of his work; but whatever be his ability in the distinctive field of teaching, he must nevertheless be a preacher. The people will be pleased if he is a good pastor, a skillful organizer, an accomplished scholar. All these they will, however, forego if he is a good preacher—that he must be.

If, then, good preaching is so essential it is important to discover the elements necessary to effective preaching. What is the purpose of preaching, what is a good sermon? In a word its purpose is vital, the production of life. In accordance with the spiritual constitution of man God has chosen preaching as the best method of reaching him with the regenerating power of religious truth. The reason for preaching is psychological, and the purpose of preaching is vital. Under the blessing of God the minister uses the sermon

for the generation, nourishment and growth of a genuine and abounding spiritual life in his hearers. It is not his only means for the accomplishment of this high and holy purpose, but it is beyond doubt the principal means, so ordained by human nature and the God of human nature. Preaching and the sermon, then, should be judged from this standpoint. The sermon is made to produce life, and if it fails in this, its sole legitimate purpose, it is a failure, however famous and popular the preacher, however numerous and enthusiastic his hearers.

If, now, the vital ideal of the sermon is the correct one, let us see how the fact affects the preparation and delivery of the sermon. Obviously, on that supposition, much that has been written on the subject has been irrelevant if not positively harmful. The sermon cannot be justly estimated by the standards applied to other literature, for the manifest reason that its purpose is different. Whatever may be the purpose of other literature that of the sermon is purely utilitarian. Indeed the production of literature is not a purpose of preaching at all. The minister is in the business of producing men, and the sermon is one of his means for the attainment of that end.

Much that has been written on the preparation and delivery of sermons has failed to keep this vital aim of the sermon steadily in mind. It has been considered too much from the standpoint of literature, too much from the standpoint of the reader and too little from that of the hearer. Sermons, it must never be forgotten, are made to be heard, not to be read. The considerations which should control their content and construction are the needs and the mental and spiritual characteristics of the congregation sitting immediately before the speaker. Here and there is an audience which is so cosmopolitan that the preacher in successfully addressing it can, if he has the ability, make sermons which will also reach a much larger audience through the printing press. But preachers of such ability are rare, and cannot be taken as models by the rest of us. We must content ourselves with the audience immediately before us; their needs and their characteristics must be met and satisfied. The sermon is, therefore, the most ephemeral, specific and local of all forms of literature, if indeed it has any just claim to be classified as literature at all. Any sermon perfectly adapted to one occasion can never without modification perfectly fit another. The sermon is, therefore,

almost necessarily ephemeral, and the sooner the average preacher recognizes this fact the better for him and the fruitfulness of his ministry.

This means that the plans for the making and delivery of sermons must be very elastic. What is good preaching in one community may be very poor in another. That is good preaching which reaches and blesses the people, and that is the best preaching which best performs this task. Give us above all adaptable preachers who are thinking of the people in all their ministrations. Frequently the sermon is poured into some fixed homiletical molds which the preacher obtained years ago in the seminary, and comes forth so stiff and stark as to have its effectiveness materially impaired. The preacher has felt that the production of sermons in accord with approved plans of homiletical workmanship constituted his business, and if this standard was attained he considered himself a good preacher. If his hearers did not relish or appreciate his efforts, so much the worse for the hearers; it only showed their perversity or stupidity, not his failure as a preacher. Now this ought to be changed. The minister ought to realize that nothing is good preaching unless it fits the congrega-

tion he is addressing, no matter how perfectly it conforms to the most approved homiletical models. It must fit and bless the people.

It is not intended to assert or even to suggest that the study of homiletics is necessarily useless or injurious. Far from it. But it is intended to affirm that slavery to the homiletical ideal of preaching may seriously impair the vital effectiveness of the message. Homiletical rules are a means to the great vital end of preaching and in no sense an end in themselves. The best service homiletics can render the preacher is to loose him and let him go—that is, to give him the power to adapt himself and use his gifts for the delivery of a life-giving message, palpitating with vital spiritual power, to the audience that sits before him—to give him this high ideal and the power to attain it. The danger of homiletics, as of all other studies whose object is practical, is that it will put the young preacher in a straight jacket of ideals and rules that will greatly hamper the free movement of his own powers. The purpose of an education is to release and train the powers of men, but there is constant danger that it will bind rather than loose. It does so by fixing the attention on subsidiary matters, thereby creating wrong ideals

which shackle individuality and destroy the power of adaptation. Paul found the highly cultured audience of Mars Hill spiritually the most barren and unresponsive he ever addressed. No denomination of modern times which has insisted on a thorough education as an absolute prerequisite to admission into the ministry has been able to reach the masses. On the other hand it is equally significant that no Christian body has been able to reach the cultured without an educated ministry. Want of adaptation through inability or unwillingness is the explanation. The uneducated man is necessarily unable to satisfy the cultured, while the educated man is often either unwilling or unable to adapt his methods of thought and expression to the uncultured. A true homiletics should help a man to fit his work to all classes, whereas it too often unfits him for work with any but the cultured. A practical homiletics needs to be based on principles of psychology rather than upon rules of rhetoric ; upon the mental and spiritual condition of the people to be addressed rather than upon the models of pulpit oratory that have charmed and edified past generations. The educated preacher is not necessarily incapable of adaptation. Paul was a highly cultured

man, trained in many respects into a haughty narrowness and exclusiveness, and yet after he became a Christian he could say of himself, "I am become all things to all men, that by all means I may save some." It was his devotion to the welfare of men that gave him this freedom; and equal devotion would give almost any man the power to reach almost any audience. Of course every man has his limitations. Perfect adaptation is impossible. What is insisted on is that the preacher shall consciously build his sermons not to attain to standards of literary excellence, but to reach and bless the people.

This does not mean, of course, that no thought or attention is to be given to the literary qualities of the sermon. On the contrary the ideal that is here being set forth requires rather more than less attention to preparation; for it means that each sermon is a separate structure whose workmanship and style must be determined by the characteristics of the particular audience to which it is to be delivered. They are not all to be constructed on one model, determined by the methods of Chrysostom, Spurgeon or some other great preacher of the past; but each is to be composed to meet its own situation. This means special attention to each separate

sermon, and consequently endless variety in style and construction. Each separate sermon becomes a work of art, specially designed and executed to fit into its own peculiar niche in the temple of humanity. Styles will differ according to the niche, and the artist can never neglect to give large attention to each creation. In some cases literary finish will be of the highest moment to the effectiveness of the sermon. Solecisms, barbarisms and even provincialisms will inevitably and greatly obscure for a cultured audience the truth that is being presented ; on the other hand overrefinement of style will with equal certainty be prejudicial to the effectiveness of the sermon delivered to the uncultured.

But while each sermon is thus a work of art in itself it must nevertheless not be forgotten that there are certain qualities that all good sermons must have in common. There is no reason for great variation in content or subject matter on account of differences in audiences. The religious needs of all men are substantially the same. Sin is universal, temptations and heart hungers do not greatly vary, the hopes and fears, weaknesses and aspirations of men vary in degree but not greatly in kind. Every sermon should be replete, therefore, with evangelical truth, that

is truth suited to meet the moral and spiritual needs of all men. It should comfort them in their sorrows, strengthen them in their aspirations, confirm them in their hopes, call them to repentance, stimulate their faith, assure them of forgiveness and victory over sin, lead them into communion and fellowship with the Father and partnership in service with Jesus Christ. Nothing but evangelical truth will do this for any congregation, cultured or boorish. Within this great body of evangelical truth there is ample room for all the variety that will ever be needed, for both man and God are inexhaustible as objects of thought, and likewise of intense and perennial interest. Just as the average reader "skips" all else in the novel that he may get the story, that is the human, so it is precisely those preachers who confine themselves to evangelical themes who to-day are heard by the greatest numbers. Occasionally some disappointed preacher is heard to assert that the people will not hear the Gospel. Of course there are many that will not hear that or anything else that is good ; but there can be no greater mistake on the part of the preacher than to turn away from the Gospel in search of more popular themes. Men are more interested in the Gospel, clearly,

earnestly, forcibly and lovingly presented, than in any other subject that can possibly be brought to their attention; and there ought to be no doubt among Christian ministers as to the value of such preaching. It is the Gospel that attracts and regenerates and reforms the life.

As the subject need not vary greatly from one congregation to another of different characteristics and culture, so there are certain common qualities of style which should characterize all preaching. The language of the sermon should obviously be clear and simple, and as attractive as possible to the audience before the preacher. Everything within the compass of the preacher's speaking powers should be done to stimulate and hold the attention, enlighten the mind, arouse and cultivate the higher emotions, strengthen and direct the will. The objective is the making of deep and lasting impressions which will bear immediate and continuous fruit in nobler living. Moreover it must be remembered that the effect of the sermon must be gathered from one swift hearing, that the more leisurely process of reading cannot be used. Hence the preacher must strive to deliver a discourse that will attract, be easily understood and profoundly impressive. Its

vocabulary and language should be as far as possible that of the people to whom it is addressed, its illustrations those with which they are familiar. Words whose signification is not immediately apprehended cloud the meaning and weaken the force of the entire sentence or paragraph. The ideal is to speak so plainly as to render misunderstanding impossible. Unfamiliar words cause a sense of strangeness, thus putting religion in a realm more or less aloof from the life of the hearers. If the audience is a highly cultured one the language of polite literature will be quite appropriate and effective; but if the people are a plain unvarnished folk the vocabulary should be our homely Saxon, plain and direct. Not that ungrammatical, slovenly or inaccurate language is necessary or desirable. However uncultured themselves the congregation will wish their pastor to employ correct speech. But the plain Anglo-Saxon of the common people is adequate to the forcible and attractive expression of all the truth which the preacher will ever need to utter, as is abundantly shown by the continued fascination and power of Bunyan's immortal allegory. There is a simplicity of speech as well as of person which is sublime.

The appropriate use of illustrations is very important to effective preaching. They give point, pith and pungency to the thought. They illuminate and adorn, they are easily remembered and frequently constitute the only part of the discourse that is recalled. This is especially true of the plainer people, but all hearers are helped by apt illustrations. To a matter of so much consequence the minister can afford to give large attention and thought. Illustrations should be selected, wrought out and fitted to the thought with almost as much care and attention as is expended on the thought itself. They should be drawn as far as practicable from the circle of thought in which the people themselves move. Illustrations which must themselves be explained before they can be used to illuminate the sermon are seriously defective for that audience, and should be used but sparingly. Illustrations from history, art and other subjects more or less familiar to a cultured audience, are less effective before the uncultured. The farmer is moved by a well turned comment on things in the country, while the city-bred man responds to the circle of city illustrations. The line of demarcation is certainly not absolute, but the general principles on which illustrations should be se-

lected is pretty clear. The point to be remembered is the fact that the illustration is not to be used to fill space, nor to adorn the tale, nor to display knowledge of nature, history or other extensive and curious learning, but solely for the good of the hearers. It is intended to help them to apprehend and remember the truth. Its purpose is vital. The characteristics and needs of the people must determine the number and character of the illustrations. They are for the sake of the people, not for the sake of the sermon or the preacher. If they help to produce an abounding life in the hearers they are good. Let the welfare of the people determine the method of illustrating.

The adoption of the vital ideal will assist in the solution of the important problem of the length of the sermon. In the light of this principle it is clear that nothing approaching a rule can be laid down for all preachers and all congregations. The needs and characteristics of the congregation together with the ability of the preacher to hold the attention are the controlling factors. A country congregation who read comparatively little and hear preaching infrequently will profit by a much longer sermon than the city congregation will submit to. The most

faithful members of the city church hear three sermons and take part in Sunday-school every week. For the country people life is not so stressful, Sunday is a rest day, there is no occasion for hurry, and hence they want a good strong meal of mental and spiritual food. On the other hand in the city not only are the week days filled with driving business, but as Christianity is at present organized and at work Sunday also is a very strenuous day for active Christian people. Under these circumstances they would be something less or more than human if they did not demand short sermons. In every case the sermon should be just long enough to do the greatest good to the people to whom it is delivered. Doubtless this can never be ascertained with accuracy; but if the preacher has the ideal consciously before him he is less likely to go astray in this regard. He is to remember that the length of the sermon is not to be determined by some homiletical ideal, nor by the usual custom of himself or other ministers, nor by the desire to expound some truth *in extenso*, but solely and alone by the needs of the people who are before him. It is well also to remember that he is not likely to confer any large blessing on the people after the average man

begins to think he has spoken long enough and to wish him to quit. Attendance on preaching is a purely voluntary matter which must be induced by attraction not by compulsion. A restless, uninterested or resentful audience is little benefited by the minister's words, however true and important they may be in themselves. Moreover resentment and complaint are not simply futile, they are positively harmful. The congregation will come to church next time not only expecting to be bored but also apprehensive lest they will be scolded. Their attitude is not likely to be favourable for a sympathetic and profitable hearing. Let the preacher control the length of his sermon by the temper and characteristics of his congregation and his ability to make it a blessing to them. Not homiletical models nor ecclesiastical customs nor the supposed interests of truth nor the dignity and standing of the ministry nor the asserted obligation of the people to hear the preacher a half hour or longer each week, but the needs and interest of the people, these considerations must control. The purpose of preaching is practical and it should be controlled by practical rather than by theoretical considerations.

The relation of the sermon to the remainder

of the service is to be determined in the same way. What proportion of the time should be given to music, how much to song and prayer, how much to the sermon, how long should the entire service be? These questions constantly perplex the minister. The chief difficulty in my opinion is the feeling that the services in all churches, at least in all churches of the same denomination, should be substantially the same. All freedom and power of adaptation is thereby sacrificed to ecclesiastical regularity. But if our principle of the vital ideal in the ministry is the correct one, that is if the interests of the people are to be considered the matter of paramount importance, then the question is much simplified. The preacher needs only to determine what is best for his congregation and proceed to do that. It may be somewhat difficult to apply the principle, but the principle itself is perfectly clear. The relation of the sermon to the rest of the service may vary from church to church, from morning to evening, from occasion to occasion. Moreover one preacher need not divide the time to the various parts of the service as any other does. In short, this principle which makes the interests of the people the controlling consideration gives the preacher freedom. He not

only can but should manage the length of the sermon and its relation to the rest of the service in the way that he and his people can get most good from it.

In the same way the principle can be applied to all the questions that arise with regard to preaching and the sermon, and they will be found to be much simplified if not entirely solved by its application. There will be freedom, flexibility and adaptability. The full personality of the preacher can express itself, unhampered by the habits and thoughts of the past. David will not be trying to fight in Saul's armour ; the man's work will be his own. Men will stand at the centre of his thought and effort ; his ministry will be vital and effective. He will be toiling as a fellow worker with God at His own great task of making a perfect humanity, that is bringing in the kingdom of God in its fullness on the earth. There will be a joy, an efficiency, an optimism and hopefulness, that are otherwise impossible. There will be less restlessness among the preachers, less dissatisfaction and criticism among the people. The vital ideal in the ministry will beget a vital ministry, and a vital ministry will create a living and triumphant Church.

## VI

### THE MINISTER AND WORSHIP

**T**HE usual services in Protestant churches consist of two parts, more or less distinct from each other. The earlier portion, consisting of song, prayer and the reading of the Scripture, may be called the worship; the remainder, consisting of the sermon and the closing exercises which are intended to gather up and fix the impressions thus far made, have for their main object instruction. It is to be feared that these two parts of the service are not very closely related to each other in the minds of many worshippers, both laymen and preachers. The tendency in Protestant churches is to lay large emphasis on the instruction, while among the Catholics it is on worship. But Protestant churches differ widely among themselves as to the relative length and other relations of the elements of instruction and worship in the service. The preacher naturally lays chief emphasis on the sermon, regarding it as the most significant

part of the service. In this opinion the majority of the laity in the non-liturgical churches agree with him. On the other hand the choir and the musical part of his audience, together with the liturgical churches generally, are disposed to stress the importance of the service of song, prayer, reading, etc.

These differences which exist among the different denominations and different churches of the same denomination are not due to any thoughtful consideration of the relative merits of the various practices, nor to the application of any intelligible principle to the determination of the content of worship. They are largely the result of inheritance. Luther with his personal tastes and peculiarities has determined the general contents of Lutheran worship down to the present time. The personal tastes and peculiarities of Zwingli and Calvin are registered in the worship of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. Cranmer and Queen Elizabeth loved ritual and ceremony, and their personal preferences are crystallized in the ornate services of the Anglican and Episcopal Churches of the world. The free bodies such as the Anabaptists, Congregationalists and Baptists, stood as a protest against the established order and were weak

in numbers, wealth and facilities. They lacked all the necessities and incentives to an elaborate ritual and consequently reacted strongly against the practices of their opponents. Naturally, too, in justifying and defending their non-conformity, they magnified the element of instruction, minimizing worship to make room for the sermon and discussions. This tradition continues especially among the Baptists who are less hospitable to ritual than most other bodies and still generally keep their services quite simple. The extreme of simplicity and bareness was developed in the Quaker meeting, whose unique services were determined by the prejudices and religious experience of their peasant founder. In the same way the character of the worship among the Methodists comes from Wesley ; and that of other bodies has been determined by the founder or the circumstances of their origin or by some predominant figure in their early history. Antiquity, custom and religious usage and experience have hallowed these various practices for their supporters and devotees until they are among the most sacred possessions of the religious life. They are practiced and defended because they have been inherited and hallowed by personal experience rather than because of the intelligent

apprehension of any intrinsic superiority. Denominations whose congregations differ widely in culture and taste often develop friction within the body because of the divergent wishes of these different churches. The great Puritan controversy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England is a case in point. The various elements of the worship constituted one of the burning points in the struggle in which both parties were loyal to the State Church. The same controversy is seen in small compass in most of the non-liturgical churches to-day.

It is not improper to ask in the midst of this confusion whether there are any principles which might guide us to peace if not to uniformity. Have we not reached the time when we ought to consider afresh the purposes of worship and the best means for attaining the desired end? Can we now calmly discuss the various elements and types of worship from the standpoint of their intrinsic merit, unhampered by the traditions of their origin and usage? Such a consideration would undoubtedly make for peace and probably for the progress of the kingdom of God. Worship touches the man in the pew more closely than any other element of religion. It is therefore a most important

matter. The following discussion is intended to be a suggestion of a way to freedom and peace and efficiency.

The value of worship is confined to those who are present and participating. Its worth must be judged by its effects upon the lives of these worshippers. In other words its effects are psychological in the religious sphere. It is not intended to affect God but men. No doubt the Father is pleased with the adoration of His children, but He will probably be the more pleased the more this worship helps His children. It is hard to see how any worship could please and glorify God unless it had this aim and effect, and having this result it could hardly fail to please the God and Father of men. If this be true, then the beneficial effects of worship on men is the matter of chief concern. The purpose is the generation of a psychological state or condition which may be termed spiritual soundness or good health. It should stimulate a consciousness of sin and a desire for holiness, it should call to repentance and point the way for faith, it should strengthen belief in the unseen spiritual realities in the midst of the materialism of the present, it should arouse elevating emotions, lead to the formation of high and holy purposes and strengthen the will for

their accomplishment. It should build up faith, hope and love. In battle it will be the crash of martial music, calling on to high endeavour ; in defeat it will lead to resignation, submission and fortitude ; in discouragement, sorrow and distress, it will soothe and sustain. In short worship should be myriad-tongued, uttering in music, prayer and song or ceremony the message needed by those present on each several occasion. The emotions are life's motors, and worship is specially intended to move the emotional nature. It will be heaven when and where the emotions come into complete harmony with the will of God. Then the life will be sound and complete. Worship should seek to realize these conditions in the life of the worshipper. It should serve the life of the men and women there present. God can have no other purpose in it. No forms or ceremonies can be sacred to Him in themselves. At a certain point in their history the Israelites trusted in the fact that they were the elect nation and had Jerusalem the holy city as their capital. But Jeremiah and other prophets informed them that all this but aggravated their guilt ; their ceremonies were hateful to God unless righteousness rolled down as a flood and a holy people made use of these blessings.

They were thinking of the institutions of religion, He of the life of the people. Religious ceremonies and holy places have no significance to Him apart from the life of the people. Worship is to be considered from just one standpoint, that of its value to the people.

The consistent application of this principle makes certain conclusions obvious and inevitable. In the first place this principle makes it clear that there must be freedom and variety in worship. If God cared for worship in itself there could be one best form that satisfied Him always and everywhere, for He is the unchangeable God. But since its effects are to be looked for in the people rather than in God, there must be adaptation to their needs; and since these needs vary from place to place there must be variety in worship. Common elements there will be, of course, in all helpful worship, because the fundamental characteristics of human nature are found in all men. But it is equally certain that the vast differences in culture, taste, religious knowledge and spiritual attainments among worshippers render wide variations necessary in the adaptation of worship to the needs of all. There is no reason why all denominations should have the same forms of worship; neither is there any reason for

exact uniformity in the usages of the various churches of the same denomination, where there are variations in taste and in mental and spiritual insight. The Scriptures contain no forms of Christian worship, while the wisdom and experience of all the Christian centuries is not equal to the task of producing a liturgy which will serve the needs of all men on all occasions. One of the most irrational acts in all Christian history is the attempt to impose the same forms of worship upon all the varied conditions and classes of people to be found in a nation, under severe ecclesiastical and civil penalties. It brought hypocrisy, bloodshed and ruin, but it did not and could not secure uniformity. It failed to take into account the fact that men are very different in their needs and that worship is designed to meet those needs. No one form of worship can possibly satisfy all these needs no matter whether the form under consideration be the noisy worship of the Salvation Army, the more dignified service of the average non-liturgical church or the ornate liturgy of the Anglicans. No one of them can possibly best fit and serve all classes. The incongruity and futility of the Salvation Army in St. Paul's cathedral would hardly be greater than that of an Anglican rector in robes on

the street corner reading his service. Neither service would be suited to its alien surroundings.

If the needs of the people are to be considered rather than some fancied sacredness or excellence in traditional forms, then any of these forms may be used, modified or discarded according as the occasion may seem to require. Is there anything in the nature of the case to prevent a liturgical church from laying aside its more formal worship if it can thereby better serve the people where it is located? On the other hand would a non-liturgical church lose any of its character or usefulness if it could better serve some of its congregations by the use of a more elaborate service? Does not the highest loyalty to the cause of Christ demand freedom in this regard?

Among a cultured and instructed people the dignity, beauty and catholicity of the liturgy might well make it more useful than an unwritten service in its effects on the life of the participants. It is the product of the thought, life and experience of generations of saintly men and women. It cannot fail to be helpful to many as is proven by its extensive use. But to impose it on all worshippers would be as irrational as to forbid it

to all, or to impose on all the unconventional services of the Salvation Army, in the hope of producing the same ebullition of religious feeling among all possible classes of people. Booth's followers strive by every means suggested by common sense, experience and religious zeal to hold the attention and bless the lives of the irreverent, unsympathetic and often debauched and besotted humanity of the streets ; the Episcopal rector has a totally different audience under equally different surroundings. Booth broke away from all accepted forms and methods of worship and Christian work because they would not serve his purposes. He was after men of a certain class, the outcasts whom the churches never touched, and he created forms which would reach and help that class. In doing so he not only saved a mass of neglected people, but also gave to all men an excellent lesson, turning their attention from the sacredness of methods to the sacredness of men. According to him the effectiveness of the service in attracting and helping men was to be its criterion of judgment. The vital ideal must dominate, he thought, and wherever there is life there will be variety. Accordingly variety was and continues to be the most striking feature of the Army services.

In like manner there is no good reason, it would seem, why any two churches of the Baptist or any other persuasion should have precisely the same services. Common sense and religious interest would seem to dictate a policy of complete freedom in the choice of such methods of worship as will best serve the needs of each congregation. And yet in the non-liturgical churches there is a rather rigid uniformity from which any church or minister may depart only at the cost of some loss of ecclesiastical standing. Uniformity in a written or an unwritten form is a fetish of many pious minds and a refuge of lazy preachers which has little to commend it in the fruits of vital living. Let the service be made to fit and bless the individual congregations.

The vital principle may also play the rôle of peacemaker between the advocates of the liturgical and the non-liturgical services. The test of the service is its effect on the congregation. The liturgy, being the product of much of the best Christian thought and experience of the past, will always be beautiful and adequate in form. It is not dependent, in these respects, on the ability and faithfulness of the individual minister who officiates. But it may be conducted in

such a perfunctory manner as to counteract all its excellencies. And the tendency is undoubtedly in this direction, since the minister is not compelled to arouse himself in preparation for the worship, knowing that its form is prescribed for him and has been recited by him hundreds of times already. This perfunctoriness is, however, by no means necessary, and the service is often read with as much fervour and impressiveness as any *ex tempore* service could possibly have. Moreover the frequent repetition of these forms of worship gradually creates an atmosphere of sacredness which helps the worshipper who is familiar with them, even when the leader falls a victim to his own incompetence or indifference.

On the other hand the *ex tempore* service, while far more adaptable than the written service, is almost wholly dependent on each individual minister for both its form and its fervour. If he is devoid of culture its form will inevitably be defective and crude, no matter how great its fervour. If he is indolent or careless of the service it will be wanting both in excellence of form and in spiritual fervour. In both the written and the unwritten service there may be utter perfunctoriness and there may be real spiritual fer-

vous. In both cases much depends on the minister. In the hands of a vital and faithful man the unwritten service has possibilities of warmth and adaptability to all congregations and occasions which the unwritten service cannot rival. The unlettered man with the uncultured congregation naturally suits his work to his people, while he would be unable to handle a liturgy. The unwritten service permits a greater variety of preachers and a greater variety in the congregations. For its highest excellence and effectiveness it requires a very high order of ability and faithfulness in the ministry; higher perhaps than is necessary for an effective service with the liturgy. If all ministers were capable of perfectly adapting the unwritten service to the congregation before them and willing to undergo the labour necessary to perform this task it would always be the best. But this will never be true, and many Christian people will continue to find greater helpfulness in the liturgy than in the *ex tempore* service. This is proven by the way in which other communions lose their members to the liturgical services of the Episcopal Church. Feeling this pull some of the non-liturgical churches have recently drawn up written services which may be used if desired in any

of their congregations, and other bodies, who have not gone so far as yet, are nevertheless beautifying and elevating their services.

On the other hand the weakness of the liturgy is seen in the revolt against it in England in the sixteenth century, and in the further fact that the Episcopal Church in America has never greatly influenced the masses of the people. It is not a people's church and probably never will be. The character of its services is probably the chief cause of its want of popularity. The common people weary of its stiffness and formality. The elevation and uniformity of its worship would make wide popularity impossible. It appeals to a rather small but quite definite class of society, and not strongly to the rest. The same statement of inadequacy for universal use may be made with equal justice of all other forms of worship when rigidly adhered to. Each has its excellencies, but each has also defects that render universal appeal impossible. And yet is not every church and denomination called of God to reach all classes of society? If this be true what is needed is elasticity, the ability and the disposition to make use of that form of service which will bring the

greatest blessings to the participants and hearers.

The most striking negation of this principle is the worship of the Catholic Church which is still kept in the Latin language. Notwithstanding much symbolic action the worship is little understood; the people see little more than a dumb show which is anything else than a "rational service." The devout Catholic believes this worship works in a magical way to bless, even when it is not understood. In fact he believes it has or may have a blessing for those who are absent; even the dead may be blessed by it. Protestantism holds that the benefits of worship must be appropriated by the rational processes of the mind; the significance of the worship must be grasped and assimilated by the thinking man. At bottom the Latin service is retained by the Catholics, because the service itself is regarded as sacred and pleasing to God. Attention is fixed on the service rather than on the men who are to be blessed. It has no message for the "unlearned and ignorant man." The first dictate of the vital principle is that the service shall be understood. This will necessarily put it in the vernacular of the people. Let it be in English, French, German, Yiddish,

whatever the people speak and understand. The people and not the service constitute the object of God's solicitude.

The vital principle requires that the entire service—language, quality and type of music, circle of thought and other constituents—should be within the easy comprehension of the people present. One had almost as well speak in a foreign tongue as to make use of a vocabulary and language that the people do not comprehend. Elegant and classic diction, abstruse thought and extensive vocabulary are not only lost on an uncultured audience, they are worse than lost. They endanger the attendance and interest of the people by making them feel inferior and incapable of reaching up to religious thought. The pastor, the church and its work, seem far away, unsympathetic and unrelated to the daily tasks and trials of their simple lives. Religion itself is likely to be thought of as something for the church house, something that needs to be shut away from the light of common day in the "dim religious light" of the sanctuary ; something for the Sabbath and the clergy, for women and children, but not for ordinary mortals with the grime and soot of life upon them. The hold of religion on the whole of life is thus endangered.

One of the severest tests of the devotion and adaptability of the cultured minister is his ability and willingness to lay aside the fringes and adornments of culture and so come at the heart of realities as to hold and help the plain man in his worship. The want of this adaptability is the explanation of the frequent failures of cultured men where others of inferior native gifts and smaller culture succeed gloriously. The latter knows the people he addresses and fits his modes of thought, feeling and expression to them; the former either does not know them or finds himself unwilling or unable to adapt himself.

In like manner the music and song should be within the reach of the people. It is a matter of common observation that sacred music of the highest quality, exquisitely rendered, fails to attract the masses. They do not comprehend it, it has no message or help for them. Popular gospel hymns, sung with verve and vigour, may not satisfy the artistic taste of the cultured, but they serve the purpose of worship for the common man far better than more elevated efforts. The music and service of the Salvation Army offend the cultured but save the human wrecks of the street. Christian music should help to save the people. It is inexcusable indifference to

the purposes of worship to insist on elevated music where the simple would serve the interests of men better. It is not the music but the people that the churches should seek to elevate and save. Just as rapidly as the progress of the people will permit an elevation of the music let the improvement be made ; but let it be kept clear that all changes are in the interest of the people rather than of the music. The richest and juiciest hay becomes food for the cattle only by being put within their reach. It is not the taste of the minister or of the paid choir that must be consulted and satisfied, but the taste and needs of those who sit in the pews.

One other question is settled by the application of the vital principle to worship—the relative length and other relations existing between the service and the sermon. The choir wants a lengthier, more elaborate, elevated and ambitious service ; the preacher wants the time for his sermon. Neither may be thinking of the needs of the people, the interested third party for whom all the services exist and by whom they are supported. How shall the contention be settled ? Obviously by considering the interests of the people. No universal rule can possibly be laid down. Usually the less instructed the people are the

more they will need to have the sermon stressed, and the more they will respond to the sermon in comparison with their response to the rest of the service. As they become more cultured, think and read for themselves more extensively, attend services more frequently, the more they are likely to value worship in comparison with the instruction of the sermon. Let the minister resolutely put their interests first no matter what his personal feelings may be or what sacrifices it may require at his hands. Not his reputation or wishes, not any usual custom or fixed standard, but the interests of the people must control.

The whole contention of this chapter amounts to this—the purpose of worship is the blessing of the people, the building up of the life of the people. No form of Christian worship now in use is wholly devoid of worth in the prosecution of this task. All forms have elements of strength, and at the same time suffer from defects peculiar to themselves. No one form of worship appeals equally to all classes. Therefore the ideal of a uniform service, for all congregations, either written or unwritten, is a fetish which should be discarded for the ideal of flexibility and adaptation to the needs of the congregations as

those needs manifest themselves in actual practice. Insistence on uniformity is unwise and contrary to both common sense and to the purpose of worship, which is the blessing of the people who are personally present. All churches and ministers should hold themselves in readiness to make use of those forms of worship which will mean most to the lives of the people.

## VII

### THE MINISTER AND CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE AND ART

**I**N the matter of church architecture two ideals are at the present time struggling for ascendancy. In the thought of some Christian men the church building is a workshop, the people's house, and is to be used freely for all good purposes which promise the uplift of humanity. It is not for use one day in seven only but every day in the week; not for worship and preaching alone, but also for teaching, social meetings, lectures, reading, and even for recreation, exercise and amusements. Little thought or money must be expended for esthetic or devotional effect. Indeed such use of "the Lord's money" is little short of misappropriation of funds when there are so many souls to save and so much misery to alleviate. So it is said. This ideal is frankly utilitarian—a utilitarianism in which the house is regarded as having no value in itself as a message or educative influence, but only as

the shop in which the work is done, the platform from which the message is delivered.

Others regard the church as God's house, sacred and separate from all ordinary life. The common light of day must be softened by stained glass windows, the sights and sounds of daily life must be shut out as far as possible, the head must be reverently bowed as one seats himself on the sacred cushions, conversation must be subdued to an awed whisper or tabooed altogether. "The Lord is in His holy temple : let all the earth keep silence before Him." The house itself is sacred, the abode of God, a message to men. Much attention and money must be devoted to religious symbolism and the artistic beautifying of the house. No amount of money or time are too great to expend on a building which is erected to the glory of God. If instruction, lectures, amusements, must be had (and it is admitted that they have their place), they must be housed in a neighbouring building which is not so sacred as this "house of God." So these people believe.

These two conceptions of the character and use of a church building are sharply clashing at the present time. The former is an exaggerated Protestant view, the latter is the Catholic conception. The fundamental

conceptions of the Christian religion itself are involved in the choice between these two types of architecture. Does the Christian religion find adequate and appropriate expression in art and architecture, sacred days and seasons, fixed ceremonies, or in the sanctified lives of men? Does any religious institution glorify God except as it blesses men? Is the thing to be aimed at in the erection of a church building the service of men or that intangible something called the glory of God? The answer to these questions determines one's attitude towards the church building. The vital ideal of the Christian religion puts us frankly on the side of the view that the service of men is the only way to serve God or glorify Him; and if the one or the other of these types of architecture must be chosen to the exclusion of the other we should unhesitatingly select the first, the one which seeks the welfare of men as the supreme reason for the existence of church buildings.

But we are not reduced to the alternative of choosing the one or the other. A little reflection will make it apparent that each type has an ideal at its base which may be made of great value to men.

The pagans regarded their temples as the

dwelling places of their gods. The Hebrews had much the same conception. It is not, therefore, strange that we find the same feelings among the Christians soon after they began to have separate buildings for their worship and religious work. This sense of the special presence of God in the church was intensified and made more concrete by the rise of the view that Christ is really present in the supper. In the ceremony of the mass, it was thought, the sacrifice of Calvary was repeated and God became actually and visibly present in the form of bread and wine. The altar, where this mysterious tragedy took place and the blessed presence was manifested, became the centre of thought and attention. The awful mystery of the divine presence enveloped it. Accordingly the great cathedrals and many of the parish churches of the Middle Ages were erected as *the dwelling places of God* in which adoration of the divine presence thought to be present in the Eucharist was the only action to be considered. The whole structure stood about the altar where God was visibly present. With such a conception of God and the church nothing but awe-struck silence and humble prostration are appropriate on the inside of the building.

Nothing of the freedom and the various activities within the buildings of the modern Protestant churches can be expected from men who hold such a view of the supper. This conception, being fundamental with the Catholics, of course abides with them.

The Reformation, by abolishing the mass and establishing a more spiritual conception of God, wrought a great change in the conception of the functions of a church building. It was no longer regarded as the dwelling place of God, nor was He thought to be present in any such special visible form as was claimed by the Catholics to be true in their churches. The Bible, the reading desk and the pulpit became the centre of attention and thought and instruction tended to displace or at least minimize ceremonial worship. The sermon took the place of the mass and churches were henceforth designed and built to facilitate public speaking. God was recognized as everywhere present, and could be found outside as well as inside the church building. Men did not come to church to find God, but to get the help which comes from the presence and instruction of men who know God.

In recent years the functions of the Protestant churches have been greatly enlarged,

occasioning further modifications of church architecture. First came the Sunday-school with its study of the Scripture, demanding facilities for teaching which the old catechetical curriculum and method, with the careful home instruction then in vogue, did not need. Thus came the Sunday-school addition to the church; then followed rooms, departments, etc. Still more recently the effort of the churches to enlarge their field of service, stem the flood of questionable amusements and control the social life of the young has stimulated the introduction of libraries, kitchens, swimming pools, equipment for basket-ball, and similar facilities. All this has created new architectural problems which have been solved in many different ways. But all of them have further broken up the unity and harmony of the church building as a whole and have tended to dissipate the atmosphere of sanctity and worship.

Such in brief outline has been the development of the form and significance of church architecture, and the ideals that predominate in the various types. The old ecclesiastical ideal tends to make the building *useless* for every purpose except ceremonial worship, and the newest ideal tends to make it *useful* for everything except worship. Each view

is seriously defective alone and in itself. Can they be combined into an ideal architecture for the modern church? Can a church not be made both useful and worshipful?

The newer ideal is undoubtedly correct in its insistence that the vital interests of men must be the controlling consideration. But we are not compelled to choose between a useful house and a beautiful and worshipful one. Rather we are obligated to discover and build the house that will contribute most to the life of man, the whole man—the house that will afford for man the service which God wants the church to render. The danger of the first ideal is secularization, that of the second is isolation; the former is vital but is in danger of losing religion, the latter is religious but tends to lose vitality; the former minimizes worship, the latter has the same effect on activity.

Having affirmed that usefulness is the final criterion by which to judge church architecture it remains to inquire what will make it most useful for its purposes. Has nothing in a building any value for the purposes of a church except good acoustics, plenty of rooms for Sunday-school and other organizations, facilities for exercise, amusements and similar forms of service? Have

Christian art and architecture no value for the life of men? Are they not useful? Assuredly so. And yet their religious and ethical value are often exaggerated. The noblest church buildings of earth arose during the Middle Ages when moral and religious life were at the ebb tide. They were built "for the glory of God." Wealth of money and talent and skill were lavished upon them. All that art and architecture could do towards the expression and fostering of religious truth and life was accomplished in the erection of these glorious piles. It is not likely that they will ever be surpassed in grandeur, beauty and impressiveness; but there was little thought of serving men by them or in them, and men have been little served. How sordid and secular the life about the great cathedral of Milan, for example! Life flows past this wonderful structure as if there were nothing beautiful or impressive in the whole world. The great building with its marvellous decorations and rich artistic effects speaks a wonderful language to the cultured tourist but is dumb to the poor citizen who lives in its shadow. If the bronze doors of the baptistry of Florence, which Michael Angelo declared worthy to be the gates of Paradise, even so much as suggest the existence of a paradise

to the crowds that brush past it, there is no evidence of the impression in their conduct. If noble architecture had possessed any large power of uplift Greece would have been the moral mentor and guide of mankind instead of their moral undoing as she really was. If art were capable of doing much for the uplift of mankind the artists would naturally be striking examples of noble living, but this has not been the case.

The fact is, the message of art and architecture is not easily perceived and appropriated by the average man. The cultured historian and antiquary will linger about the great cathedrals, tracing their history as seen in their construction with kindling interest, enthralled with the glories of soaring column and vaulted roof, the long vistas of nave and aisle, the far beauties of the exalted dome, the mysteries of the great altar, the splendours of window and organ ; he will bow in solemn reverence before the varied symbolism, the placid beauty and deep significance of the whole. In it all God speaks and he hears. So it is in less degree in the beautiful parish churches of the older Christian countries. But the common man is not so moved by these things. It is only the unusual man who has eyes to see and ears to hear the

voice of God in the glories of church architecture. To be effective it requires a cultivated interpreter. Stone and mortar, paint and mosaic, do not speak with the same clearness and insistence as the human voice or the printed page. We may not expect, then, any great moral and spiritual service to be rendered the common man by the most impressive architecture. It is too high, he cannot attain unto it. The human personality and voice are indispensable to the implanting of Christian truth and the building of Christian character in him, and chief emphasis in Protestant churches must be put on facilities for preaching and instruction. The sense of sacredness and reverence which a Catholic feels is impossible and undesirable in a Protestant. God is not present in the church in such special and peculiar way as to create a feeling of awful fear and reverence for this place. God is equally present everywhere. "Not in this mountain nor at Jerusalem, but in spirit and truth."

And yet noble architecture has in itself the power of great blessing to many, and these the most cultured. It cannot be disregarded. The church is a distinctive building for a distinctive purpose, and its construction should not only afford room and facilities for the ac-

complishment of the ends in view, but the architecture should contribute all that can be effected in this way for the same ends. "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Whatever architecture can do to aid and assist in this worshipful spirit ought to be done.

Is it not possible to combine the two ideals of Christian architecture? Can it not be the "people's house" and "God's house" at the same time? Can it ever be truly the people's house without at the same time being God's house, and vice versa? The feet of the people, present for their own highest welfare, can never profane a house of God. Nothing in this world is too sacred and holy to be used for their good. It was for them that Christ died, and no building can be dedicated to Him without at the same time being dedicated to them. But it is not necessary that a church building should resemble a barn or be treated as one in order to be of use to the people. A good warehouse is an excellent institution for its purposes in a community, but a church is not designed to meet the same needs as a warehouse, and should, therefore, be different from one.

The problem before the Christian architect of to-day is to produce a church that shall afford ample accommodations for all the

varied activities of modern church life, and at the same time preserve unity and harmony throughout the whole, and throw over all departments the atmosphere of worship. Let him remember first of all, above all and always, that a church is erected by and for the people, that the sole reason for its existence is the service and welfare of men. But he must also remember that it has its own peculiar mission to the community. It is not a barn nor a blacksmith shop. It stands primarily to serve spiritual interests, to fight sin and the destructive forces that infest and infect modern society, to build up the life of the individual and the community, to woo and win men to faith in God and righteous living. In this task a worthy building, substantial and beautiful, genuine at every point, suggestive as a whole (and in its details) of the reality and importance of the spiritual, the presence of the divine, the victory of faith and hope, the joy of religious service will be a most valuable asset. These qualities should be incorporated without sacrificing any of the utilitarian value of the house on the one side or creating a sense of the mysterious sacredness of the house on the other.

It is important that all the activities of the church should be carried on under the same

roof in the same building. A separate building for any part of the church's work tends to break up the unity of the whole and secularize that portion which is separated from the place of worship. There is not wanting a disposition on the part of adult Sunday-school classes, young people's societies and some other organizations to become detached from the church. This tendency explains in part, no doubt, the decreasing attendance in American churches in recent years. It is undoubtedly strengthened by breaking up the various activities of the church, and carrying them into different rooms or even separate buildings; for it is much easier to slip away from such a room than from the church auditorium. By all means have everything under the same roof.

But more than this, the entire building should be a unit, harmonious in design and execution. Whatever architecture can do in aid of worship ought to be done in all parts of the building. The spirit of worship ought to pervade the Sunday-school department, the recreation and amusement rooms equally with the church. They are just as sacred as the spot from which the sermon is delivered. Basket-ball, if played in a church, should be played in the consciousness of a pure religious atmosphere. Too often the architect creates

a worshipful auditorium, while the other portions of the building have no more suggestions of religion than an ordinary school-room or gymnasium. The child thus loses in his tenderest and most impressionable years while frequently in Sunday-school but rarely in the auditorium, all the blessings of worshipful surroundings. It is not any occasion of wonder if he shows no attachment to the place of worship when he grows to maturity. His religious training has lacked the element of worship all along, and he is slow to pick it up.

Christian architects should address themselves seriously to the problem of creating an architecture suitable to the needs that have been called into being by the religious developments of the last fifty years. Heretofore we have had a church with other institutions around it; we need a church with all the institutions and activities within it and bathed in its atmosphere. It can be done and it ought to be done. The matter is important. The church building is for the service of men, and the creation of a worshipful atmosphere and spirit in all departments of religious work, unifying the whole under this gracious and blessed influence, is one of the greatest services that the building can possibly render

the community. Let us have buildings fitted to satisfy the varied needs of the church to-day, but let all departments be under the unifying spirit of worship.

Much that has been said of architecture is equally true of Christian painting and sculpture. The medieval church made much of Christian art; all the great churches and many of the smaller ones were beautified and adorned by rich treasures of art. But the productions of Christian art, as is well known, were not used simply for purposes of adornment and instruction, nor alone as aids to worship and the inspiration of religious sentiments; theoretically they were used as objects of adoration and in actual practice they were doubtless really worshipped by many, thus becoming objects of a new idolatry. Very many of the most prized treasures of Christian art were once in use as altar pieces. This abuse of art, together with the veneration of the saints who so frequently appeared in art, caused the Protestants, and especially the Calvinists, to react violently against their use in worship and even their presence in the churches. Storms of iconoclasm broke out on occasions when all such objects were forcibly removed from the churches and destroyed; stained glass win-

dows of priceless value were shattered, and pictures on the interior walls were painted out. Empty niches on the exterior walls tell of the destruction of the statuary which once adorned the outside of the great cathedrals. To the Reformers who were just emerging from the Roman Church these objects were the paraphernalia of idolatrous worship, and, therefore, to be destroyed with a ruthless hand. They themselves had been Romanists, and must have known how they were used ; their own experience with these objects is the justification for their violent opposition to them and lawless destruction of them.

But we are now far enough away from the dangers of Catholicism and idolatry to permit even the descendants of the Calvinists to begin a tentative employment of Christian art again in the churches. Nearly all denominations have finally admitted the organ ; and the stained glass window, even containing figures of men who are Catholic saints, is found in very many Protestant churches. Pictures are employed for pedagogical purposes in the Sunday-school. But there Christian art stops in most Protestant churches. Here and there churches go further and attempt to assist the worshipper by the use of art. A worthy painting of Jesus is now

sometimes seen over the pulpit or the baptistry, such a painting as might really assist the heart in rising to God. But it is probable that Catholic misuse of Christian art will long prevent Protestants from employing it even in legitimate and helpful ways. We largely judge the value of things from our former prejudices rather than from their intrinsic worth.

In some respects Protestantism can never foster Christian art as Catholicism has done. Protestants have not the same traditions of art behind them to stimulate effort, nor do they live so much in the past as the Catholics do. Saints and martyrs mean far less to Protestants than to Catholics. Modern historical investigation and criticism have exploded and dissipated the legends and conventional subjects which form so large a part of the material utilized by the medieval and Renaissance painters. The less materialistic and more spiritual religious views of Protestantism restrain its painters from attempting themes that were freely handled by the Catholics. But it is probable that Protestant painting will gain in reality and in influence on the daily life of the present more than it loses in the compass of its material. In recent years Protestantism has surpassed Catholicism in religious painting—in depth,

reality, compass and spirituality. Some time this art may be made richly helpful to the spiritual life of Protestants without any of the objectionable features of the past, as it is already a means of attractive adornment.

Both as to art and architecture the minister must remember that he cannot consult his own tastes, nor follow the standards which his culture and training would warrant in his case. He must take conditions as they are, and pursue that policy which will be best for his congregation. There may be strong though groundless prejudice against stained glass windows or the use of human figures either in the windows or on the walls. This feeling may appear to him very foolish, but as the shepherd of souls he cannot fail to consult the interests of his flock rather than his own tastes. His ministry is to life and of that he must think constantly. Art and architecture must be made to serve life, the life of the people that attend that particular church. Anything that would hinder that supreme goal must be discarded, everything that can be done to assist in this task through the construction and adornment of the building in which the work is to be accomplished should surely be done. Life here as everywhere else is the supreme consideration.

## VIII

### THE MINISTER AND THE BIBLE

**B**IBLICAL criticism has put a very considerable strain on the modern Christian world. The consciousness of difficulties in the Bible is nothing new. The early Christian fathers discovered many such difficulties in their own studies or had them thrust upon their attention by the assaults of their opponents. These difficulties were met in various ways more or less convincing, but never entirely satisfactory and never final. During the Middle Ages the critical spirit was dormant; the authority of the Church was final for scholar as well as layman. The Bible, known almost exclusively to scholars, was accepted as far as it was used at all without question as the Church interpreted it. Most of the Reformers of the sixteenth century took the same attitude as to the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures, and even strengthened it by setting an infallible Bible over against the Catholic Church which they had repudiated and were leaving. Such an

attitude was almost inevitable, for they were fighting a church that claimed to be infallible and they naturally felt need of the support of something with an equal authority. The inerrancy ascribed to the Bible extended to every detail of composition and content. These sentiments with regard to the Scriptures continued through the seventeenth century, the age of dogmatic Protestant orthodoxy.

With the rehabilitation of the critical spirit in the eighteenth century the historic Protestant views of the Bible and Christian doctrine were again challenged. This attack on what was believed to be the fundamental position of Protestantism came from the children of its own bosom, and at first was sternly frowned upon. It, however, increased in volume and power throughout most of the nineteenth century, and has at length mastered most of the Protestant scholarship of the world. Confined for a long time to the learned some of these views have at length filtered down into the mass of Christian people until one finds in Sunday-school literature statements that would have horrified adult Christians a century ago. While acceptance of the critical attitude is true of many Christians, at the same time many pious people hold back and

anathematize these so-called "advanced" views. This variance and antagonism existing between different sections of the Christian community puts a great strain on Christian fellowship. Throughout the Christian world the bonds of fraternal feeling and co-operation are more or less weakened by this want of harmony with regard to the origin, interpretation and authority of the Bible. Heresy trials on this subject are probably not wholly behind us.

There is then both hearty agreement and sharp disagreements with regard to the Bible. By the almost unanimous consent of Christian scholars and the testimony of Christian experience the Bible is in some sense a unique revelation from God. Opinions differ widely as to the date, authorship and composition of some of its books; they do not entirely agree as to the nature and extent of its authority, nor as to the measure and manner in which it is inspired, nor as to the character of the revelation that appears in its pages; they vary widely as to the interpretation of individual passages and as to its teachings as a whole on certain subjects. But Catholic and Protestant, Calvinist and Arminian, liberal and conservative, maintain the uniqueness of this Book. In its pages

they find God as nowhere else. The simple believer and the erudite scholar draw from its pages comfort in sorrow, light in the shadow of doubt, hope when despair threatens to overwhelm, strength in hours of temptation and weakness. By common consent the conception of God found here is the most satisfying and stimulating known to man. The Psalms express our present-day religious experiences better than we can do in our own language. The Bible reader is conscious of a continuous enrichment of his life from the springs of its instruction and inspiration. If God is not the God found in the Bible then He is indeed the great unknown, and if He could be known He would probably have little value for our lives. Of course it is in the Bible and there only that we come to know God as revealed in Jesus Christ, the highest and completest manifestation of God we can ever have. Whatever treasures exist in Him we mine from the Bible alone.

About thus much Christian scholars of all schools are practically agreed. But along with this conviction of the unique value of the Bible many scholars admit mistakes in detail, due to the fact that revelation has been progressive, that the agents of revelation were imperfect in character and knowledge, to the

exigencies of transmission through centuries of copying, and to other causes. But their faith in God and in Christ as the Redeemer is, they insist, in no way affected by these minor defects. They look at the Book as a whole, in the large, and, seen in perspective, it is in a unique and authoritative sense the Book of God. They use it in the support and cultivation of their own spiritual life as diligently and as lovingly as any. Their faith does not depend on belief in its absolute inerrancy in every detail ; minor discrepancies do not shock or shake their faith.

On the other hand a great part of the Protestant people have so long regarded the Bible as absolutely infallible in every particular that the first suggestion of even the smallest error shocks their faith ; indeed their Christian hope seems to be dependent upon the maintenance of the complete accuracy of the Bible in every particular. Recession from this position undoubtedly seems to threaten the stability of their faith.

What is the preacher's duty under these trying circumstances? For they are trying to the preacher, bent upon the accomplishment of practical tasks, regardless of his own convictions in the premises. Shall he ally himself with the conservatives or with the liberals,

with the orthodox or the heretics? Or ought he to remain neutral, either through ignorance of the questions at issue or indifference to the results of the controversy, or fear for his own ecclesiastical standing? There can be no question that his position judged from a purely practical standpoint is often perplexing.

But certain facts and principles necessary to his guidance seem to be reasonably clear, in view of his practical and vital aims. He needs to keep it clear in his consciousness that his duties are practical and constructive rather than literary and critical. They are vital, having to do with men rather than with literature. The Bible is one of his implements, not his field of labour. There is a place for the Biblical scholar who makes the Bible his field of endeavour, but the preacher has chosen the world of mankind as his field. In its cultivation he ought to be an expert, an authority, a distinction to which he can never attain in the field of criticism while he continues his work as a minister. As a practical man he has the right, he may regard it as a duty incumbent upon him, to sit in judgment upon the results of the work done by other men in the critical field. But he does it as a practical man using the resources of common sense and general rather than technical

knowledge. Often conclusions of the scientist in this and other departments of investigation need just this check of common sense, and the preacher need feel no hesitation in applying this test.

It seems hardly necessary to say that he must jealously guard his mental independence and honesty. He must never allow fear or any other motive of personal interest to deflect him for a moment from the path of absolute sincerity. To play hide-and-seek with the truth is to condemn oneself to mental barrenness and spiritual decay. Even if loyalty to honest and hard-earned convictions puts him into disharmony with his church, let it come; when the variance reaches such a pitch that they can no longer do the Lord's work together let him relieve the tension by handing in his resignation, not by repudiating his sincere and honest convictions. Proper self-respect and due devotion to the welfare of men render this course unavoidable.

He must frankly recognize *facts*, no matter what they are or by whom they were discovered and revealed to the world. They may contradict his own former beliefs and threaten to overthrow the faith of some; but if after honest investigation they are facts to him they must be accepted. A fact is a fact

and sooner or later it will be recognized as such by rational and thoughtful men. Moreover the minister ought to rest secure in the conviction that no fact or truth can long endanger faith ; faith is so vital that it quickly adapts itself to the advancing knowledge that comes through discovery in every field of learning, Biblical and literary as well as scientific and philosophical. The fact that the period of greatest scientific progress and most rabid Biblical criticism has also been the period of most rapid Christian expansion should provoke optimistic reflections. Certainly no minister is called upon to close his mind to facts, much less deny them, in the interest of established beliefs. Indeed he dare not do so. Such a course of action would richly deserve the contempt which it would surely invite.

Only let him be sure that alleged facts are really such, at least determined by him to be so after the application of all available tests. Acceptance of facts is not equivalent to the passive gulping of all that is handed out by some scholar or school whose fame happens for the moment to be in the ascendant. It presupposes the vigorous exercise of one's own common sense in a critical estimate of what is offered. There are fashions in opinion

as well as dress. A position need not continue to be held because it is old or be accepted because it is new. The preacher is interested in its truth and reality, not in its age or antecedents. We need such a profound confidence in facts, their stability and serviceableness, as to inspire us to toil for them with consuming zeal. Such an attitude will demand courage of a high order ; but with confidence in facts a man can walk firmly and steadily where the steps of others may falter and fail. In places and at times it will require as much courage to walk in the old paths and be cried out as orthodox as at other times and places will be necessary in accepting something new which may involve the charge of heresy. And this statement applies to all departments of Christian thought equally as much as to the various views of the Bible. But in the face of all difficulties and the pain which it may cost him the minister must still search for facts and accept nothing but what he regards as facts. In the end he will find that facts have the highest value for the life of men, and his function in the world is the service of the life of men.

In the third place the minister should remember that most of the questions handled and most of the conclusions reached by Bib-

lical criticism are only remotely related to the life of men. They are not, therefore, proper themes for pulpit treatment. However interesting they may be to the scholar they are inexpressibly dreary, abstruse and petty to the common man. They are the mere husks of truth at the best, and men want the kernels. Whatever in them is true will gradually and naturally filter into the lives of men without the inevitable shock which must come with direct treatment. What men need to learn from the Bible and the pulpit is to know and serve God, not when or how or by whom the Pentateuch or Isaiah was composed. To know infallibly the solution of every question that has engaged the attention of Biblical critics for a hundred years would contribute nothing to the spiritual life of a single man. The pastor who is continually hammering on Biblical criticism is wasting and worse than wasting his time, for he may be weakening and unsettling the faith of some whom he was called of God to strengthen and establish. The date and composition of the Homeric poems in no way affects the beauty and sublimity of the Iliad or the Odyssey; the question of the authorship of Macbeth or Hamlet, however decided, can neither enhance nor dimin-

ish the value of the contents of these masterpieces. In like manner the minister should remember that it is not a knowledge of the authorship, date and composition of the Biblical books that can help men, but a knowledge of the God who shines out from the pages of that Book. The Bible is not an end but a means; the saving knowledge of God is the end and the Bible is the means to that holy end. Knowledge of the Bible has little importance except as it aids to the knowledge of God. Apart from its relation to God Israel's history is only the story of one of the smaller and less important segments of humanity and Israel's literature merely a fragment of the world's great output. It is God's presence in the nation that gives it significance. The preacher would do as well to descant upon Greek or Roman history and literature as upon that of Israel unless he sees God in the latter. The discussion of the composition of the Homeric poems is just as edifying as the question of two or more Isaiahs. The point insisted upon is the worthlessness of all such disquisitions for the specific purposes of the preacher. It is not some theory of the Bible's composition or inspiration that is valuable, but the Bible itself,

Let the preacher take the Bible as he finds it and use it for the supreme purposes of the ministry. The average man does not trouble himself and will not suffer the preacher to trouble him about abstruse and technical questions concerning the Bible; it is the meat, the ethical and spiritual content of the Book, which he wants. Unconsciously and unerringly, if left to himself, he chooses and uses those portions of the Word which are replete with religious fatness. He does not argue that the Psalms and the Gospel of John are more inspired than Chronicles or Esther. The question of the relative inspiration of the various parts of the Bible has never risen to plague him; but the former books he uses, the latter he leaves by the side. In proportion as the preacher is interested in the life of the men of to-day he will seek to bring to them that message which is fraught with the richest blessings. Out of the Bible he will bring to his parishioners the contents of our religion; his message will be a religious and ethical one. In the Bible he will find both for himself and others such treasures as no other book affords, such knowledge as can be gathered from no other source. And this he will do regardless of any theory of the date and authorship of

any of its books. If he will allow the Bible to speak for itself to his heart and head it will tell him of God and give him the wisdom and power necessary to bring others to that knowledge. This statement is justified not only in the experience of the individual but also on the broader arena of Christian history as a whole. Those men who have been most diligent and faithful in the study and preaching of the Bible have been most successful as ministers and Christian workers ; likewise those periods in Christian history in which the Bible has been most widely circulated and generally studied have also shown most evangelical zeal and renewing power. It was Wesley's proclamation of the message of the Bible which regenerated England in the last half of the eighteenth century. The cold, contemptuous intellectualism of the eighteenth century melted and disappeared in the warm gulf stream of vital Scriptural preaching. The Bible is here to be used.

## IX

### THE MINISTER AND HIS CHURCH

ONE of the most perplexing problems that confronts the young minister of to-day in America is that of the relation of himself and his church to other churches and denominations. American Christianity is splintered into fragments as that of no other country. Many of the denominations came to these shores in the early settlement of the country bringing from their European homes the bitterness of years of strife. Others have sprung up here, but amid the hardship and turmoil of struggles that have left deep clefts behind. Denominational competition has brought its blessings no doubt, but the gains have been accompanied by terrible losses in friction and controversy. These and other circumstances have conspired to make the religious life of America very strictly denominational. Even where little unfriendly feeling has existed, the lines of separation, not only in beliefs and practices but also in those tasks of human service that should be common to all Chris-

tians, have been very clearly drawn. Men would work together in business and pleasure, but in the tasks of the kingdom of God they held sharply apart. These conditions obtained more or less widely down to the generation that preceded ours.

At present these conditions are changing. There is friendlier feeling between the various religious bodies, and many noble Christian men and women have begun to look with some hopefulness for the ultimate union of divided Protestantism, if not of all Christendom. Ours is apparently an age of transition, always a difficult time for the conscientious Christian man. This change of sentiment is due to many causes—the world-wide longing for peace in every sphere of life, the growing sense of the overwhelming size and difficulty of the Christian task at home and abroad as the knowledge of a world's need presses in upon us, the movement for the conservation of resources and the elimination of waste in religion as in other spheres of labour, the exaltation of the practical over the theoretical and the decline of interest in theological speculations and divisions, the dawning consciousness of the essential unity of all true Christians in the great spiritual realities and tasks, and others. Whatever the causes of

the change the fact of the change brings more or less embarrassment and strain to many ministers.

On the one hand the past draws fast about the minister the lines of denominationalism. The shibboleths of controversy die slowly and painfully. Long after they have ceased to represent realities they linger to vex and to retard progress. Moreover the older brethren who may have waded through the bitterness of controversies are likely to be unable to escape the blight in later years. They are prone to stand for aloofness. Again those general workers whose duties lead them to foster and rely upon strong denominational support are apt to look askance at any *rapprochement* of the denominations, lest it weaken denominational efficiency and lame their own work.

Less worthy motives are not wanting. All the unsanctified elements of human nature array themselves on the side of denominational aloofness—bitterness, hatred, the petty ambitions of small men, the love of contention and glory, and other unworthy motives.

Besides this pressure from without there comes to the young minister a powerful internal plea. He is himself probably the spiritual offspring of the denomination to

whose membership he belongs. He cherishes, and rightly so, a degree of reverence and gratitude for this foster mother that renders it extremely difficult for him to do anything that would cause pain or even apparent injury. He believes in the truth and rightness of its doctrines and practices as in those of no other church or denomination. As a minister of the body which gave him spiritual life and continues to nourish him he owes the loyal service which he solemnly vowed at his ordination to give. Moreover, his standing, good name and usefulness, his very living, are dependent on the confidence with which his own people regard him. There is no undenominational, unorganized Christianity in America to give him support. Still further he recognizes the fact that organization is absolutely necessary to any effective work in religion, as in other things where great tasks are to be accomplished. To be without the support of an organization is for all except those who are great enough to create their own organizations, to be shorn of all possibility of doing anything worth while. These and other considerations tend to make him a strict denominational man, ready to fight the battles of his church and stand with it against all others.

On the other hand much of the best in modern life tends to lead him away from the strict denominationalism of the old style. He recognizes the fact that the kingdom of God is greater than his or any other church, and he remembers that the Master talked much of the kingdom and little of the church. He looks at the noble work other denominations are doing, scarcely inferior if not actually superior to that done by his own; he recognizes the hand of God working with them and asks himself why he should not himself coöperate. He sees the need of power for the great tasks of the kingdom, tasks that tax the resources of the Christian world, and he longs for that efficiency which comes through unity. He looks about him and sees what appears to be a great loss of power through the reduplication of plants and forces and the inevitable friction and heat which develop where the same work is being attempted by different Christian bodies. He studies church history and learns that the peculiarities of this and that denomination, his own among them, are due in large measure to the personal peculiarities and exigencies of some man or men of the sixteenth or some later century. He traces the history and development of his particular type of theology only

to discover a very human continuity of strife and struggle which severely shakes his confidence in its finality and infallibility. He learns the faults and weaknesses of his own church as well as the excellences and strength of others. He sees how others have blessed the world, how men are still strengthened and uplifted by them. All this tends inevitably to weaken the strenuousness of his denominational partisanship. It is comparatively easy for an ignorant and provincial man who knows nothing of other churches beyond the petty squabbles of village religious life to stand aloof and remain hostile ; it is not so easy for the man whose vision is enlarged by study and by an earnest effort for the Christianizing of the whole world and the whole of life. All his selfish feelings and interests and some of the noblest feelings of his life lie on the side of denominationalism, while many of the best aspirations of himself and others weigh on the other side. What is he to do under these circumstances ?

Obviously it is not strange that many young men, and older ones for that matter, find themselves in great embarrassment at present. When they weigh the practical considerations of the immediate present they are driven powerfully towards a vigorous denomination-

alism ; when other Christian sentiments and ideals come under review they feel themselves drawn no less strongly in the opposite direction. They find those who are leading in the *work* of their church earnestly emphasizing and developing the distinctive and the denominational, while the leaders of *thought*, whose personal interests would be secure in any event, inclined to harmonious coöperation and even union with others. In his own congregation the minister will probably find some who deprecate his denominational narrowness and others who with equal vigour protest against his undue liberalism. These conditions are not everywhere equally acute, but sense of mal-adjustment and strain is not wholly wanting in any part of our country. The question must be repeated, What is the preacher to do ?

Let him recall the fact that the task of the minister is preëminently a practical one. His aim is ideal, but the material and means with which he is to work are far from ideal. He must take human nature as he finds it and do with it what he can to bring it up as far as possible towards the Christian standard of perfection. His primary duty before God is the nurture of life in men ; consequently that course of action which, tested in the long

run and looked at in the large, will contribute most to the life of men will be his line of duty. Put in other words, it is his first duty to consider the interests of the kingdom of God. No other considerations can possibly be paramount. This high purpose will not solve all his perplexities, but it will give a working principle of great value. He must remember that he is not to decide individual questions from purely local and temporary considerations. The issues at stake are not temporary. Compromise may seem to be the course dictated by Christian sentiment and common sense, and yet judged by the light of the centuries it may prove to be the highest unwisdom. It was largely through the door of compromise that those beliefs and practices entered, which transformed the primitive Church into the great Catholic body. What seemed to be the way of prudence and progress proved to be the broad road that led rapidly towards destruction. It might conceivably be so again. Nothing of permanent importance must be given away in the interest of any supposed Christian unity and fraternity. On the other hand mere partisan prejudice must not be allowed to hinder efficiency in the work of the kingdom. The question the preacher must de-

cide is the ultimate effect of this or that course of action on the life of men.

Many denominational differences are undoubtedly without vital significance, the troublesome rubbish and débris of former controversies. Others involve loyalty to the teachings of Scripture even as to the very essence of the Christian religion. Still others involve important questions of fraternity and expediency that cannot be ignored. Serious men will not expect serious and conscientious men to sacrifice convictions about such matters. Some of the talk in behalf of Christian union is scarcely creditable to either the intelligence or the faithfulness of its advocates. Some questions cut too deep into the heart of things, they have too much bearing on the eternal destiny and welfare of men to be arbitrated, blurred or compromised.

It is, however, most gratifying that the fuller emphasis which is constantly being put on the spiritual side of Christianity is constantly diminishing the space that separates the various Christian bodies. The spiritual elements of Christianity have never been the prime causes of division and strife. Differences gather about the outward manifestations of religion; neither has there been any great difference among the independent scholars of

the Christian world as to the teaching of Scripture as to these matters and the task that lies before the followers of Christ. Differences have arisen when conscious or unconscious additions have been made to the simplicity of Christ's Gospel. Frequently these have been imposed on men not only by the power of the Church but also by that of the State. Unfortunately we have not yet gotten away from the effects of this attitude of mind. Multitudes of Christian men will not permit the freedom with which Christ has made us free ; but as the spiritual becomes the predominant consideration this attitude must weaken and gradually disappear. In the meantime the minister must be loyal to the truth and to the spirit of Jesus Christ, fraternal with all the followers of the Master, ready to work with every man who is not against us, for the coming of the kingdom on the earth, thinking always first of all of his own supreme task of building up the life of men by bringing them to know God. Vital truth cannot and will not be sacrificed. No earnest man will expect another to stultify his conscience by denying or leaving in abeyance what he believes to be important truth. Such a course would be disloyalty to the highest qualities of manhood with which we have

been endowed, and would inevitably result in serious mental and spiritual deterioration. Loyalty, fraternity and coöperation in the service of the life of men, that must be the minister's guide in the midst of the perplexities and difficulties of his position in America. If his soul is sometimes vexed and restive because of the hardships incident to a divided Christendom, let him recall the fact that periods of unity have had their own great evils to endure. There has been unity without harmony, unity without life and without outlook.

## X

### THE MINISTER AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

IT is a compliment to the churches and their ministry that all manner of reforms so largely turn to them for comfort and assistance and feel such keen disappointment and resentment when they fail to respond as readily and generously as is thought to be proper. If the churches do not themselves institute reforms they are relied on for support and are at once exploited in the interest of almost every movement which aims at the betterment of man through popular support. In Europe the beggars sit by the church doors, and in this country every man who is pleading for help in a good cause besieges the church. In these days such benevolent movements, local and general, are multitudinous and their demands on the time and strength of the minister are large and insistent. If he fails to lend a ready ear and a helping hand to every good cause he is branded as an ignorant reactionary out of sympathy with his times. On the other hand no man's strength would be equal to the

burden of actively supporting all the worthy causes that are brought to the attention of our city churches to-day, even if he gave his whole time to the task. Moreover by such preoccupation he would lose the valuable asset of his ministerial calling and position which give these movements access to the churches and render the minister's support so weighty and desirable. He would then be only a reformer like the rest, and his distinctive spiritual functions would disappear. What is he to do in this perplexing embarrassment of riches? The very extra-ecclesiastical forces which are so powerfully making for truth and righteousness and are in very large degree his allies frequently embarrass him by their numbers, excellence and insistence.

The application of the vital principle to his work will often help him. According to this principle he is to serve man—oppose and destroy his enemies, build up his life. Let him keep this goal steadily in view and be controlled by that aim. He is called to serve man, the whole of man, body, mind, and spirit—man physical, moral, intellectual, spiritual. All parts of man are equally the handiwork of God and the health and development of each part contributes to the wel-

fare of all others and of the whole. The Gospel aims at the salvation of all the parts, the whole man, and consequently everything in humanity is worthy of the thought and effort of God's minister. He can and should, therefore, encourage all movements that look to the betterment of men in any respect—better homes, adequate wages, reasonable hours; sanitary, safe, healthful working conditions; moral and healthful amusements, good schools, the prevention of contagious and infectious diseases, protection from the dangers of vice and other moral contamination come within his purview. But in the midst of this service he cannot forget that his distinctive work has to do with the spiritual nature of man. If man can be made morally and spiritually sound through the ministrations of religion all other problems will be greatly simplified. The minister in his spiritual functions is laying the axe at the root of the upas tree of all evils.

The minister must not, therefore, permit anything to interfere with his duty to the spirits of men. "This is life eternal that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." The minister's peculiar function is to make men know God in Jesus Christ, and having ac-

complished this task he has ministered eternal life to the whole man, and eradicated most of his evils. And moreover he and the ecclesiastical and social institutions and activities under his direction are the only agencies engaged in this specific task. The school trains the mind, the conscience, the body, more or less successfully ; it does not seek to lead men to a knowledge of God. In fact religious training and even moral instruction are largely excluded from or at least neglected in our state schools. Numberless agencies are working towards the improvement of man's physical condition and environment. The newspapers are enlisted, the press groans with the output of books and pamphlets on economic and social questions, labour unions and individual reformers thunder and plead and anathematize, clubs watch the theatres, dance halls and picture shows. The tide of interest in these matters is running at the flood and threatens to engulf all distinctively religious work. But not one of all these varied and multitudinous forms of activity in the interest of the temporal lives of men gives any attention to their souls. The average man can still say in the midst of this clamorous social striving, "No man careth for my soul." The minister's supreme duty and

function remain still his own. He is without a rival or one who aspires to be a rival in this field. He is the only man and the Church is the only institution who are seeking to lead men to root their lives in the realities of the unseen spiritual world and take hold upon the issues of eternity. And it is a grave question whether it is possible to keep a man climbing the upward path in other respects while his deepest self is neglected.

The minister's field is the life of man, the whole of man; but like every other wise labourer he will give particular attention to those parts of the field which are most in need of his care and which promise to respond most generously and liberally to his efforts. If other labourers occupy the same field he will seek to avoid duplication of equipment and effort.

As the minister examines the conditions of his field from time to time he will find the needs varying. The spiritual needs will always be there and will always be left for his treatment—spiritual blindness, indifference and deadness leading to a whole train of other evils. The other human needs will vary from field to field and from time to time in the same field. The faithful pastor must meet these too. He will sometimes find his

people ignorant of unhealthful social conditions and apathetic towards social reform ; it will be necessary for him to instruct and arouse them to the needs and to their duty in the premises. Again he will find them unconscious of the menace of disease, or of prevalent moral dangers, or of economic injustice in the community. Here again it is his province to inform and warn and arouse. Sometimes the issues in political contests are at bottom moral, but the moral issues are often obscured by party passions and prejudices and the greed for position and power. The average politician fears a moral question, shuns and taboos it as much as possible. It is often the preacher's duty to strip these questions of confusing details and the obscuring smoke of battle and set them forth in their naked and fundamental meaning so that the average man may see the real issues at stake.

But all this must necessarily be on the side. The preacher is not a social reformer nor a political agitator nor a walking delegate. "Christianity ceases to be Christian if it puts the material prosperity of the masses in the forefront, as the thing that is to be aimed at first and before all else, and only claims that religion is not to be overlooked as one of many

means for realizing this secular aim." That there is some danger that some preachers may be swept away by the flood of social interest and activity now regnant among us will hardly be denied by any careful observer. The fact that there are also many who are wholly unmoved by the cry of their fellows from the factory and the tenement does not alter the danger to others. Now and then a minister deserts the pulpit for the lecture platform or the political hustings or becomes a labour agitator as a means of larger usefulness. The tide has been too strong and he has yielded, and yet if he be a true minister he has undoubtedly shallowed and narrowed his field of usefulness. Had Jesus of Nazareth devoted Himself to the amelioration of the political, social and economic conditions of His people His name might have been preserved to us as that of another patriotic agitator whom the Roman government had cut off in mid-career. Nobody would have suspected that He was the divine Saviour of mankind. By confining His attention to the deepest things He renovated the whole man and modified the face of mankind.

It is sometimes charged that Christianity is uninterested in the physical and social welfare of men. The charge is the fruit of

either ignorance or malice. While the Church has steadily laid chief stress on the spiritual and eternal interests of men it has neither forgotten men's bodies nor divorced the spiritual from the actual and the practical. It has never been wholly otherworldly. During its entire history the Church has sought to improve the temporal condition of men, and during the Middle Ages it was almost the sole support of those agencies and institutions which strove for the social and moral and physical uplift of society. The schools and the other means for the preservation and dissemination of culture, the care of the poor and defective, the control of marriage and divorce; the struggle with vice, drunkenness, slavery, poverty, disease, not only found in the Church support and sympathy, but were almost wholly in the hands of the Church. Indeed these duties were so engrossing that the Church was largely secularized by their weight. In modern times they have been very largely transferred to the State, but this has been through no fault of the Church. The transfer was due in part to the fact that the State had robbed the Church of its large financial resources leaving it unable to cope with such tasks as it formerly wrought, and partly to

the divided condition of Protestantism which leaves the State the only institution which approximately represents the whole of society and commands sufficient resources to meet the demands. It is the spirit of Jesus Christ which is penetrating the whole of society and transforming the State into a benevolent institution operated for the benefit of all rather than for the prince and his entourage. This enlargement of the functions and resources of the State has left the Church much freer to perform its own peculiar spiritual functions, but has deprived it of the large field where its services were much more obvious and where reasons for gratitude were tangible. It does not and cannot devote itself so largely to the serving of tables; that work is now done by other agencies. As in the long ago the apostles sought freedom from temporalities that they might give themselves undividedly to the spiritual work of the kingdom, so to-day the Church has been relieved by the progress of events from the strain of the material burdens that rested upon it in the Middle Ages. It is to be hoped that it will give itself to prayer and the ministration of the Word with undivided attention and unflagging devotion. Tables must be served, the whole man must

be cared for, living conditions must be improved at countless points. But these do not constitute the main matter in the work of the kingdom of God. Ministers must assist in the generation of the spirit and motives which are necessary to these beneficent activities, must often instruct, exhort and direct; but their business is with the spirits of men. Man's soul, this is the neglected field, left almost entirely to the minister's care.

The vital principle forbids the prescribing of rules of action in this as in other aspects of ministerial labour, but it certainly assists him to a judicious distribution of his efforts. It helps him to recognize his field as neither man's soul nor man's body, but the whole of man. The goal is the adequate cultivation of this whole field so as to produce the best and soundest man possible. To do this the minister will need to make himself acquainted with all human needs on his field of labour and enter sympathetically into all human striving for higher, happier and holier living. Knowing his field thoroughly and seeking to aid and inspire all endeavours for the welfare of man he will put in his own ploughshare where there is most neglect and most promise of a rich and abundant harvest. The amount of time and attention to be devoted to social

questions must, therefore, be determined by the conditions of his parish and community and his own aptitudes ; but the minister can never forget that the way to give men life is to bring them to know God the Father and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

The effort has been made in the preceding pages to show that the true ideal of the ministry is the vital one of producing godlike men and women, and also to point out how the conscious adoption of this ideal by the minister would affect various aspects of his work and relations. The number could be extended, but it is believed that sufficient has been said to show the fruitfulness of the idea. Should all the ministers of the Christian religion come to this ideal much of our inefficiency, divisions and strifes would disappear in the warmth of a great effort to realize the holiness and happiness of the kingdom of God on earth. The output of Christian work is a regenerated humanity ; all else in our churches is only contributory to that supreme end. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

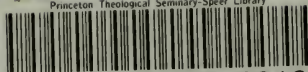


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